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WASHTENAW JEWISH NEWS

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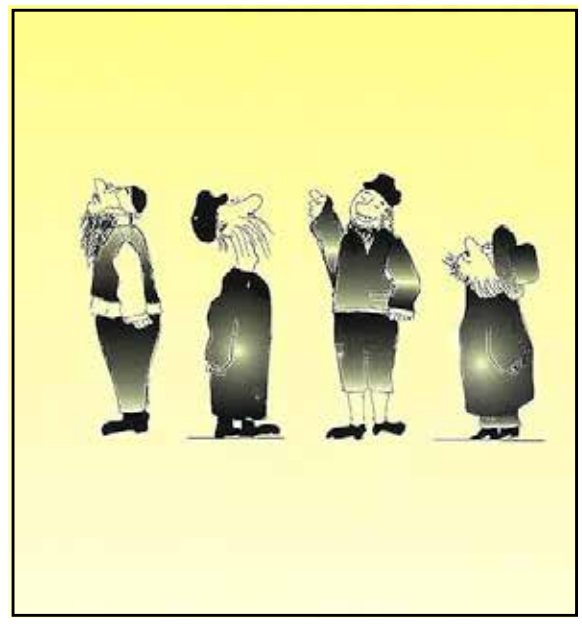
A Weissman in Chełm

By Zach Weissman

There is a long tradition of satire in Jewish literature, often inspired by some of the more eccentric arguments posed by Talmudic sages over the centuries. In the mid-18th century, a particular subgenre of Jewish satire which I will call the "Wise Man" trope began to gain popularity. In these "Wise Man" stories, a small Jewish town of well-meaning fools would be faced with some sort of whimsical problem requiring the sage advice of the town's Wise Men. The Wise Men (usually rabbis and elders) would then convene and concoct — in all sincerity — a fittingly silly solution to the town's problem. The following is a condensed retelling of a story typifying the genre:

The Jews of a small village have decided to build a new synagogue, and all the residents work together to dig a hole for the foundation. Upon completing the excavation, the villagers are unable to figure out how to dispose of the giant mound of excavated dirt and so seek assistance from the council of elders. After weeks of deliberation, the council of elders advises the villagers to dig a second hole of the same size and fill it with the problematic mound of dirt. Upon digging and then refilling this second hole, the villagers realize to their horror that there remains a giant mound of dirt. This time they go straight to the wisest man in the whole village; the town's wizened but retired Rebbi. The Rebbi mulls over the problem for a few moments, then announces the solution: dig another hole, but this time dig it twice as deep! The villagers thank the Rebbi and praise his wisdom, grateful to have such a brilliant mind in their village.



Early versions of these stories set them in fictional towns, often with names that betrayed the premise (such as Issac Mayer Dick's stories set in the village of "Durachok," a play on the Russian word for "fool"). By the late 19th century, however, the very real town of Chełm became the chosen setting for "Wise Man" tales. While it is unknown precisely why or how this convention came to be, my personal theory is that some upstart Jewish philosopher in Chełm fancied himself the next Maimonides. To take him down a peg, the Jewish writers of nearby Lublin — then the heart of Jewish life in Poland — breathed into life a new kind of "wise man" from Chełm. Whatever their path, though, the Wise Men of Chełm quickly established themselves in the world of Jewish folklore, and their stories found homes on bookcases the world over.

I grew up on these stories, and it was thanks in no small part to a collection of them by Solomon Simon that, at the age of five, I discovered the joy of reading. I always enjoyed the (mis)adventures of Chełm's wise men and often pictured what sort of world they inhabited that allowed for such shenanigans. It wasn't until quite recently that I learned that Chełm is a real place, and given that I was to be travelling through eastern Poland on my way to Kyiv, I made a point of stopping to visit.

I have — through the pages of a story book — visited Chełm many times; I held my breath as the mayor sentenced a fish to death by drowning

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Belong to the world, bring your tribe

By Lauren Zinn, special to the WJN

Over the next several issues, the WJN will print excerpts from Lauren Zinn's book, Belong to the World, Bring Your Tribe: Reimagining Judaism in the Interspiritual Age. Early readers of her work in progress have said: "Zinn's vision of a Jewish future … is a roadmap for the evolution of all religions that should be read as a catalyst for the transformation of your religion." — Rabbi Rami Shapiro. "Lauren Zinn is an intellectual force advancing the new Judaism." — Professor Barry Checkoway.

Lauren Zinn

Interspiritual Judaism: A Vision

God was in this place and I, I did not know. Genesis 28:16

Twenty-five years ago, I made a phone call to an interfaith seminary. The secretary who answered the phone shared her enthusiasm for their program. As I wondered aloud if becoming an interfaith minister was a betrayal of my Jewish identity, she told me she was Jewish and added, "But Judaism is too small to fit all of me. I am so much more." She loved her Jewish culture, she said, but she couldn't belong to only-Judaism without shrinking who she was. Her experience was not uncommon. Over the years, I thought about what she meant. I believe it is not Judaism that was too small for her but the worldview through which it was received.

In other words, it is not the case that Judaism, or any religion, is small. Judaism, a rich and deep system of thought, is anything but small. It only seems small when consciousness is too big. When our consciousness expands, a new worldview is formed with frames for reality, new institutions, and new values. The secretary's worldview had expanded and she no longer fit in the one through which she received Judaism. When we "contain multitudes," as Walt Whitman wrote, we no longer fit in boxes designed for one. Religions have been operating from such boxes, or worldviews, while consciousness has been expanding. Now, religions need to catch up. And they will change in the process.

But how can collective consciousness be expanding when society is moving in the direction of exclusivity and isolationism? We see this today in the way the current United States government rids workplaces and websites of justice, dismisses civil servants, guts education, rejects science, ruptures international relationships, deports immigrants and minorities, and more. The domain of re-

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From the editor

Stormy thoughts

Sometimes it takes me days to write these few hundred words in my From the Editor column for the WJN. This is one of those times. The spring weather has been so beautiful and turbulent, with storms blowing up and within minutes passing to sun-filled skies. I'll start by sharing a poem I wrote last week.

Today, my Jewish women's writing class is on the theme "our bodies."
What does 'zaftig' mean to me?
How do I feel when I look in the mirror?
I can't think about my body today.
Israel is dropping bombs on apartment buildings, hospitals, and tents.
I see the children, so many, losing limbs.
I see people my age starving.
To death.
What I see is unbearable.
I don't want anyone who is not in Gaza today to think about their body.
I want to give myself over entirely to prayer for the end of war.
I can pray with my body. Not like Heschel, marching for justice.
Heschel said God suffers with us.
The body of God is suffering.
God has so many bodies, each being, plant, stone, water.
The body of God is water.
My body is water.
The 60,000 dead in Gaza are water.
Air.
Death is the end of suffering.
All morning I listened to Amazing Grace,
written by a reformed slaver.
A prayer, for when it's too late.

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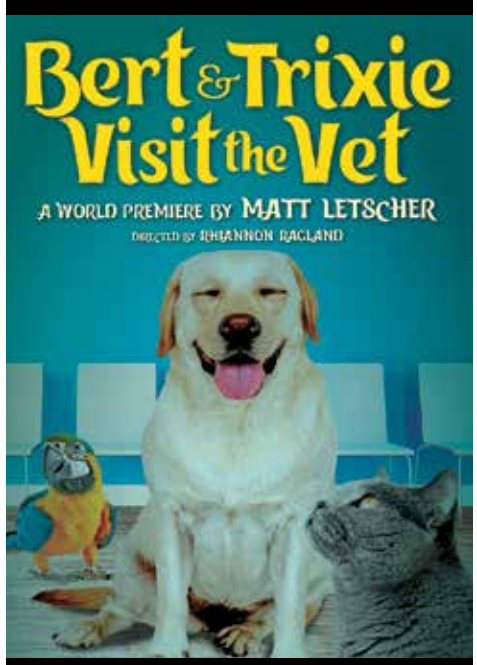

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The green mitzvah: environmental stewardship at Hebrew Day School

By Orit Aviran, Director of Communications, Marketing and Admissions, Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor

As Shavuot approaches with its celebration of harvest and renewal, Hebrew Day School reflects on our decade as a Michigan Green School. This recognition highlights our dedication to weaving environmental awareness into our students' education in ways that honor both scientific understanding and Jewish tradition.

At Hebrew Day School, "For a person is like a tree of the field" (Deuteronomy 20:19) isn't just poetic — it's a practiced value. What sets our approach apart is how we integrate Jewish values — particularly tikkun olam (repairing the world) and bal tashchit (avoiding needless waste) — creating a meaningful framework that connects environmental action to cultural identity.

Shavuot reminds us of our connection to the land and the cycles that sustain us, a connection easily forgotten nowadays, when we receive our products in nice packages, far away from where and how they were produced. To emphasize and strengthen this connection, our students learn to protect the earth's bounty through hands-on projects such as planting a pollinator garden while learning about native species and discussing the Jewish value of preserving biodiversity.

Today's children increasingly experience "eco-anxiety" — a legitimate worry we adults might be too eager to forget. At Hebrew Day School, we address this not by minimizing concerns, but by channeling them into action: When students compost food scraps, plant seedlings, or participate in campus cleanups, they transform abstract worry into concrete contribution. One third-grader recently shared how much better she felt about climate change after helping with our composting system — a powerful testament to action as an antidote to anxiety.

"Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy" (Psalm 126) is a wisdom applied to both environmental work and education itself. The seeds we plant in children's minds now may not bear immediate fruit, but will eventually blossom in their adult choices.

Our Green School status represents our pledge to foster environmental ethics grounded in Jewish tradition. This is tikkun olam in its most literal sense — the preservation of our shared world. From reducing waste in our lunchroom to advocating for sustainable practices in our community, at Hebrew Day School we're raising young people who understand that individual actions matter. The challenges are real, but the rewards — environmentally mindful young leaders poised to make a difference — make every effort worthwhile. ■

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JCC introduces specialty camps for summer 2025!

Coming this summer, the Ann Arbor JCC is excited to offer a new set of Specialty Camps to kids entering grades 3–6! From dancing, to cooking, to sports, to art, the JCC's Specialty Camps will be the most fun part of your child's summer! Check out the dates for our camps:

July 7–11: Pompon Dance Camp with Skyline High School Coach Carrie Bora

July 14–18: Cooking Camp with Zachary Bernstein

July 28–August 1: SportsPlay Camp by Kidokinetics

August 4–8: Hebrew Immersion Art Camp with Amichay Findling and ShinShinim

August 11–15: Short Playwriting Camp with Zachary Bernstein

Register now at jccannarbor.org/specialty-camps ■

Ann Arbor ORT Spring Dinner will be June 18

By Joan Levitt

The Ann Arbor chapter of ORT America will hold its annual Spring Donor Dinner on Wednesday, June 18. The dinner will be held at 6 p.m., at the JCC of Greater Ann Arbor, 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, Ann Arbor.

Jill Kind, LMSW and Director of WISE Aging Services at Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw, will discuss what is important to know about benefits and services for older adults in Washtenaw County. While the status of federal programs is uncertain and changing daily, a new Washtenaw County Older Adult Millage may provide some local support for seniors in need. Jill will provide a broad perspective of relevant policy issues at the national level with insight into critical services within our county.

The event will provide ORT members and prospective members the opportunity to honor the chapter's generous donors. Ann Arbor ORT's contributions to ORT America are essential for its programs to serve the needs of 200,000 individuals annually in more than 30 countries throughout the world. Donations are especially important for ORT programs in Ukraine and Israel where students have critical educational and psychological needs.

The catered dinner will cost $36 per person. Rides to the dinner will be available to those who need them. For more information or to rsvp, please contact Joan Levitt at jflevitt2@gmail.com by June 4. ■

Food insecurity rate rising in Washtenaw County

New data released in May shows that food insecurity in Washtenaw County has risen from 12.5% to 14%, meaning that 1 in 7 residents do not have reliable access to enough nutritious food to live a healthy life.

Food Gatherers, the food bank and food rescue program serving Washtenaw County, is purchasing more food at higher costs in response to the increased demand and is on track to distribute 10 million pounds of food this fiscal year.

Adding to the challenges, a reliable source of USDA food that accounts for 15% of Food Gatherers' total distribution, or 1.5 million pounds of food, was abruptly cancelled in March. Despite cuts, Food Gatherers is committed to maintaining the same level of service to their network of 140 partner pantries and programs across Washtenaw County. Food Gatherers estimates it will need an additional $2.5 million to make up for the variety of nutritious food that this USDA source provided.

To shore up this safety net, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners recently passed a resolution to release $500,000 to help Food Gatherers sustain service levels to older adults throughout the county.

"Hunger is an urgent issue in Washtenaw County," says Food Gatherers' President & CEO, Eileen Spring. "We are grateful to Washtenaw County for stepping up at this moment. We are hoping that other government entities and private philanthropy follow suit so our neighbors continue to have access to healthy food."

Map the Meal Gap, now in its 15th year, provides local-level estimates of food insecurity and food costs for every county and congressional district. The study builds upon USDA's most recent national and state data report, showing that 47 million people experienced food insecurity in 2023, the highest rate in over a decade.

More than 40% of families in Southeastern Michigan struggle to afford basic needs, including food, housing, and health care, due to income-related factors, inflated costs of living, and systemic barriers to opportunity.

Additional key takeaways from the report and an interactive map detailing food insecurity by geography, income, race, and ethnicity can be found on the Map the Meal Gap website. To find food or get involved with Food Gatherers, visit_foodgatherers.org.

Methodology

Map the Meal Gap uses publicly available data from the USDA Economic Research Service, U.S. Census Bureau, and Bureau of Labor Statistics to estimate local food insecurity at the county, congressional district, and state levels. The study also estimates local meal costs and food budget shortfalls using food price data from NIQ, based on the USDA's Thrifty Food Plan, and grocery sales tax data for every county and state in the country.

To learn how food insecurity impacts your community, visit FeedingAmerica.org/MaptheMealGap. For more information about Food Gatherers and how to help end hunger in Washtenaw County, visit foodgatherers.org.

About Food Gatherers

Food Gatherers' mission is to alleviate hunger and eliminate its root causes in Washtenaw County. As the county's food bank and food rescue program, Food Gatherers distributed 9.9 million pounds of food — the equivalent of 8.2 million meals — to more than 140 community partners and programs serving adults, seniors, and children last year. For a list of our partner programs or to learn how you can become involved in the fight against hunger locally, please visit FoodGatherers.org or call 734-761-2796.

About Feeding America

Feeding America is committed to an America where no one is hungry. We support tens of millions of people who experience food insecurity to get the food and resources they need to thrive as part of a nationwide network of food banks, statewide food bank associations, food pantries, and meal programs. We also invest in innovative solutions to increase equitable access to nutritious food, advocate for legislation that improves food security, and work to address factors that impact food security, such as health, cost of living, and employment. We partner with people experiencing food insecurity, policymakers, organizations, and supporters, united with them in a movement to end hunger. Visit FeedingAmerica.org to learn more.

food gatherers.

Catholic Charities' new programs for seniors

Catholic Charities Washtenaw County (CCWC) is excited to introduce Seniors for Healthy Choices, a new program that celebrates healthy aging and educates older adults on a variety of topics, including medication management, understanding the biological changes associated with aging, substance misuse, and simple tools to help participants feel more empowered about their healthcare. According to the New Jersey Prevention Network, 81% of adults in America age 65+ take at least one prescription medication each day. The more medications an individual takes, the greater the chance of medication misuse or adverse side effects.

This free, evidence-based program is open to anyone in Washtenaw County age 60 or older and offers six lessons over six weeks. All participants will receive a Medication Toolkit that includes items to make it easier to take medication as prescribed, including a medication diary, a list of common medications and their side effects, and a medication bottle opener. Free refreshments and giveaways will be provided at each lesson.

The inaugural six-week group of Seniors for Healthy Choices classes will begin on May 28 and run from 1 to 3 p.m. at the CCWC office (4925 Packard Road in Ann Arbor). For more information, contact Lisa Catledge at lcatledge@ccwcwashtenaw.org or (734) 971-9781, Ext. 453. ■

A2J Climate Circle

Beth Israel completes LED lighting installation

By Michael Simon

The Beth Israel Congregation (BIC) Green Team has completed installation of LED lighting. The project was funded in part through a grant from the "Detroit Adamah Climate Action Fund" along with a rebate from DTE Energy.

The project included replacement of 415 luminaires (lighting replacement parts) including 338 in the main building and 77 in the school annex. With this installation, BIC is predicted to save $7,826.95 in electric costs annually, for a payback period of 3.6 years.

Motivation for this work came from membership in the Ann Arbor 2030 District, and subsequent free ASHRAE level II energy audit. The congregation had a good working relationship with the contractor "Energy Specialties Group," and the work was completed well before the grant deadline.

Adamah Detroit is a Jewish environmental organization which focuses on environmental education, leadership development, and climate action programs and initiatives. BIC has a long history with Adamah and has received other smaller grants that supported the congregation's community garden, restroom and staff lounge motion sensors, and an earlier LED pilot project. BIC is one of the founding members of Adamah's Jewish Climate Leadership Council and is eligible for other funding opportunities through the membership.

According to the Consumer Guide to Energy-Efficient Lighting, 90% of the energy from incandescent bulbs is released as heat, and only 10% as light. The light-emitting diode, or LED, has had an enormous impact on the lighting market, using up to 90% less energy and lasting up to 25 times longer than incandescent bulbs. DTE offers rebates on a wide range of LED products from individual bulbs for private homes to large-scale commercial installations.

The goal of the BIC Green Team is to facilitate synagogue-wide energy sustainable practices and to educate congregants on the importance of mitigating climate change. On its horizon is a project involving multiple components of the synagogue infrastructure including the HVAC system, kitchen equipment, roof with updated insulation, and the installation of solar panels. The BIC Green Team believes that this work is an essential component of the Jewish value of repairing the world (Tikun Olam). They hope that its example and initiative will inspire both BIC membership and the rest of the Jewish community to make the conversion to LED, and through united efforts, help to illuminate the path forward for many years to come. ■

Climate Action Shabbat potluck and service at TBE

By Donald Levitt

Temple Beth Emeth will be hosting a Climate Action Shabbat service on June 27 at 6:30 p.m. This service will include prayers, readings, and teachings with a focus on climate action and environmental justice.

"The Climate Action Shabbat service will be guided by tikkun olam — the Jewish responsibility to heal, repair, and transform the world," notes Bill Parkus, who is leading preparations for this service. "We want to raise awareness about the climate crisis and our moral and spiritual obligations — as Jews — to take action."

At 5 p.m. that same evening, the A2J Climate Circle will be hosting a Climate Action Shabbat Potluck in the Temple Beth Emeth Social Hall. The potluck will provide an opportunity for anyone with an interest in climate action — whether an experienced climate activist or someone just starting to learn about climate change — to meet with and learn from others. The potluck will end in plenty of time to allow participants to attend the Climate Action Shabbat service.

The entire community is invited to both the Climate Action Shabbat service and the potluck. A link to register for the potluck can be found at A2JClimateCircle.com. Questions can be directed to info@A2JClimateCircle.com. ■

Localizing Jewish climate response

By Dr. Mike Shriberg, excerpted from a d'var Torah at Beth Israel Congregation's Eco-Shabbat on May 10, 2025

Mike Shriberg

I am very honored to talk about two dominant threads of my life and experience, which in the past seem to be running in parallel but separate tracks but lately have been starting to intertwine, as they should.

The first is environmental advocacy — my profession and passion is finding pathways toward sustainable solutions for our world, our country, and our region. But we've had an intense shock to the system in the form of a federal presidential administration that is openly and transparently hostile to climate and water protections, or any protections for natural resources.

The second is my Jewish faith, which is core to my identity and culture. Of course, the shock here is October 7 and experiencing the stunning rise of antisemitism in its wake.

So, these separate threads, while strong, were and are showing some wear and tear. I've been asking myself and was asked here to address how they connect and how they can be strengthened with hope.

First, I find this hope in the support for restoring the Great Lakes and, generally, in protecting and enjoying our natural world. The Great Lakes are the great uniters of the region. Support for protecting and restoring the Great Lakes cuts across all demographics and political divisions — rising above 90% in Michigan. There is well documented hope and healing in the natural world. But, again, there's disruption, and not just from the political world. While the Great Lakes are the great uniters, climate change is the great disruptor. Climate change is wreaking havoc on the Lakes.

Second, while our shared religion and history is what unites us a people — the horrors of Hamas and the war in Gaza have taken a toll on that unity. Today's Torah portion contains many environmental lessons such as "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest," and to allow fruit trees to grow for at least several years before harvesting. But perhaps most powerful and on point is the famous "love your neighbor as yourself." This is often interpreted as a push for collective action. It's our faith that drives community as a uniting force, much like nature is a uniting force, particularly in tough times.

So, what do we do? To me, and to the scholars that I relate to, action is the best antidote to feeling overwhelmed and helpless, and that action is most effective when based in our communities.

On the environment, what we are seeing is a blossoming of action at the regional, state, and local level, as well as by businesses, nonprofits, philanthropies, and others. This will—– in the long-term—– create greater strength in the movement.

Ann Arbor is at the epicenter of this movement. Perhaps most notably, Ann Arbor is the midst of taking control of our own power — literally and figuratively — by creating a sustainable energy utility that will put clean, renewable, low-cost power directly into the hands of our citizens. My research has shown this to be the most effective strategy for local communities, and we have among the most ambitious climate goals in the country. We simply are not letting the federal backsliding pull us down.

The Jewish community is stepping up as a key local partner. While the Ann Arbor Jewish Climate Circle is relatively new, the actions are not. At my synagogue — Temple Beth Emeth — we have the Dayenu Circle, which has not only held extraordinarily informative events and hosted community leaders but is transforming the physical space into a model of sustainability and responsibility, all while building deeper community connections. Right here, I'm impressed and inspired by your Green Team's action to reduce your carbon footprint via energy efficiency and renewable energy, undertake more sustainable food practices, and educate the community. These actions build community, the common thread that unites us as a species, and — I believe — the pathway out of the sustainability morass and antisemitism that we've seen rise. This is the true unity of our people and our power.

We are living in the most divisive and dangerous times for our people and our planet that I've experienced. In these times of struggle, refocusing on local actions and community is what lights the pathway out. The linking of our Jewish faith and the need for action on climate and sustainability is a key part of this pathway, and I'm honored that you invited me here to share some thoughts on these linkages as a way toward unity and well-being. Thank you, please engage, and Shabbat Shalom.

Mike Shriberg, Ph.D. is a Professor of Practice and Engagement at the University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability. ■

Frankel Center for Judaic Studies celebrates class of 2025

The Jean & Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan applauds the Class of 2025, consisting of 18 minors and three majors. Our graduates are moving on to pursue new educational degrees, travel, and employment in fields such as public relations, social work, law, music, and art.

Anastasia Khomyak was selected as the inaugural recipient of the "Outstanding Undergraduate Essay Award." For this award, all undergraduate students enrolled in our courses were eligible to submit an essay they wrote on any aspect of Jewish history, society, politics, or culture. Khomyak's essay stood out to our committee for its insightful analysis and scholarly contribution to our understanding of UM student responses after the fall of the Soviet Union. Her ability to engage with complex ideas and present them in a clear, articulate manner is exemplary of the academic excellence we strive to foster here at the Frankel Center. This award recognizes her hard work and dedication to Jewish history, society, politics, and culture.

The Marshall Weinberg Prize is bestowed annually to an outstanding graduate student who is engaged in writing a dissertation. This year's recipient was Alice Mishkin, who spent the year completing her original dissertation project, "Anger, Betrayal, Grief, and the Search for an 'Authentically Jewish' Political Home."

Sophie Pardo-Reed was selected as the recipient of the "Deborah Dash Moore Award for Academic Excellence." This award is based on academic merit and faculty recommendations. Pardo-Reed was recognized for her superior aptitude in Judaic Studies and significant promise for her future endeavors.

In recognition of their exceptional contribution to Yiddish classes, Asa Brunet-Jailly and Kristen Morgenstern were selected as this year's recipients of the Outstanding Yiddish Student Award. Each year, the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies presents the Outstanding Yiddish Student Award to students enrolled in first- or second-year Yiddish whose classwork and commitment to Yiddish stand out.

Sara Taub was selected as the recipient of the "Jeffrey Veidlinger Award for Dedication to the Frankel Center." The award was created to honor students who demonstrate deep investment in the Judaic Studies department. It aims to annually reward a student who has devoted their time and energy to the advancement and success of the department. Ideal candidates for this award are not solely participants in undergraduate events; they go beyond by bringing their friends and promoting our events within their larger networks. These students introduce fresh ideas and assist in conveying the needs of the student body to the department.

The 2025 graduates join a distinguished group of Frankel Center alumni. We wish them the best of luck! ■

Class of 2025

Major

Mia Hirsch, Ari Leflein, Sophie Pardo-Reed

Minor

Natalie Brook, Maya Goldshaw, Raffi Klausner, Eva Kubacki, Jack Landstein, Jonah Leibowitz, Jordana Lerner, Joshua Marx, Adi Mizrahi, Katie Moore, Sari Rosenberg, Anabelle Schlakman, Nathaniel Seevak, Avi Shapira, Emma Shimovich, Sara Taub, Sofie Wheeler, Alexandra Yaker

TBE events in June

Events and services are both in person and/or virtual. Please see www.templebethemeth.org for full details, location information, and links.

Tot Shabbat Service & Dinner
Fridays at 5:45 p.m. (June 6 and June 13 only)
Join the Clergy to celebrate Shabbat with fun activities, stories, songs, and age-appropriate learning for children ages 0–5. Registration requested.
Elementary Shabbat Service & Dinner (every second Friday of the month)
Fridays at 5:45 p.m.
A short service, song session, and community building! Most appropriate for children ages 5–10 and their parents, grandparents, and other adults. Everyone is welcome! Registration requested.

Wine & Cheese Shabbat Reception
Fridays at 6 p.m. (except for the second Friday of each month)

Shabbat Service
Fridays at 6:30 p.m.
Every 2nd Friday at 7:30 p.m.

Confirmation Shabbat Service
Friday, June 6, at 6:30 p.m.

Family Camp
Friday, June 13, at 6:45 p.m.
Family Camp provides an opportunity for families to play and learn together, for students to reinforce and share some of what they are learning in the classroom, and most importantly, to strengthen ties among students and parents/caretakers.

Juneteenth Shabbat Service
Friday, June 13, at 7:30 p.m.

LGBTQ Shabbat Potluck
Friday, June 20, at 5:30 p.m.

Pride Shabbat Service
Friday, June 20, at 6:30 p.m.

A2J Climate Circle Action Potluck
Friday, June 27, at 5 p.m.

Climate Action Shabbat Service
Friday, June 27, at 6:30 p.m.

Shabbat morning Torah study
Saturdays at 8:50 a.m.
Join us for this weekly discussion of the Torah portion.

Saturday Shabbat service
Saturdays at 10 a.m.
Weekday morning blessings
Weekdays at 9:15 a.m.
Join TBE lay leaders each weekday morning for a short service of song, poetry, and meditation.
Twenty-five-minute mindfulness with Jewish spiritual director Linda Greene
Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m.
Zoom room opens at 8:15 a.m. for optional check-in. Blessing and intention setting 8:30–8:35 a.m. Meditate 8:35–9 a.m. Start your day centered and connected.

Queer Torah Study
Tuesdays at 7 p.m.
Join us in person or via Zoom for a discussion of queer themes in the weekly Torah portion! Led by Ari Marcotte & Ari Smith. Guest leaders welcome! Contact Ari M (ari.j.marcotte@gmail.com) for more information.
Back Door Food Pantry
Thursdays, 4 to 7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner
Thursdays at 5 p.m.
Join Claire Weiner for a 40-minute meditation session.
Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Whinston
Fridays at 12 p.m.

Weekly Mahj
Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.
Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m.
WTBE Gift Shop Open
Friday at 5:30 p.m. | Second Friday of every month open at 6:30 p.m.
Washtenaw County's only Judaica Shop!

New Member Brunch
Sunday, June 1, at 11 a.m.
Annual Tri-Board and Genesis Meetings
Sunday, June 1, at 2 p.m.

Yizkor Service
Monday, June 2, at 10 a.m.
Coping with Chronic Illness and Pains
Tuesday, June 3, at 4 p.m.

Annual Congregational Meeting
Wednesday, June 4, at 7:30 p.m.

Jewish Book Club
Thursdays, June 5, 19, and 26, at 11 a.m.

Genesis 50th Anniversary Celebration
Sunday, June 8, at 3 p.m.

WTBE Fiber Arts
Mondays, June 9 and 23, at 7:30 p.m.

WTBE Historical Novel Reading Group
Wednesday, June 11, at 1 p.m.

Genesis at 50: a Celebration in Song with Kol Halev and St. Clare's Choir
Wednesday, June 11, at 7 p.m.

Brotherhood Guys Night Out
Thursday, June 12, at 6 p.m.

A Taste of Talmud
Mondays, June 9 and 16, at 12 p.m. and 7:30
Bereavement Group
Tuesday, June 17, at 4 p.m.
The group will have opportunities to share openly about their process of grieving and will also have topic-based readings to spark discussion.

Renaissance Bowling Night
Sunday, June 22, at 4 p.m.

Women's Rosh Chodesh Circle
Saturday, June 28, at 4:30 p.m.

Genesis Toledo Mud Hens Game
Sunday, June 29, at 4 p.m.

A response to "A short history"

By Eileen Freed, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

When I saw an article in the May WJN titled "A short history of Jewish communal fundraising in Ann Arbor," I was intrigued. I was not familiar with the author and was curious to see what he had to say.

I appreciate Mr. Ben-Baruch's analysis, as it highlights some important early history of our organized Jewish community, which is — in comparison to most other communities our size — quite young.

I reached out to a couple of community leaders who were instrumental during the period described and who still live in Ann Arbor. They found his descriptions of the discussions around funding Israel and the local community, and around the formation of the Jewish Federation, to be quite accurate. One leader, who was a proponent of more local funding, said that it was a "battle to have 10% of the donations stay local."

Nancy Margolis, Executive Director of the JCC and Jewish Federation for 11 years, said that rather than an effort to "challenge the monopoly on fundraising," the aim of those who sought to shift funds locally was to "build a strong local community." These volunteers and donors raised money for a Jewish community center, thereby increasing overall fundraising in the community, and that trend has continued.

While much of the early history provided was instructive, some contentions made by Mr. Ben-Baruch did not ring true. While 1967 was a turning point, American Jewry was not as indifferent to Israel as he suggests. American Jews were donating money, buying Israel bonds, and were generally very supportive of the Jewish State. And Jewish Federations across North America were actively fundraising for both local needs and in support of Israel. In fact, rather than allocating "small amounts to UJA," a significant proportion of communal funds raised were directed toward projects in Israel through this collective process.

Today, Jewish Federations across North America make varied decisions regarding how to divide their funds between Israel and local needs. There are some communities who give as high as over half their campaign to overseas projects, and others who give as little as 1–3%. The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor has allocated about 20% of its campaign funds to Israel/Overseas initiatives for many years, which is roughly the national average.

I believe Mr. Ben-Baruch misrepresents ways in which Federations in general, and our Federation in particular, support Israel through communal donations. I will not address specific allegations made regarding funding in the 1980s except to say that it is simply not true that "most of the funds" raised through the Jewish Federation and allocated to Israeli projects through UJA supported the occupation and expansion of Jewish settlements.

What I can speak to is the way in which our Jewish Federation stewards the funds entrusted to us by our generous donors who hold a range of views on Israel and its government.

In the early 2000s, an Israel-Overseas Allocations Committee of volunteers established and identified clear priorities for direct funding of projects in Israel and around the world. They were and remain: 1) Promoting pluralism and tolerance among Jewish groups in Israel, 2) Fostering Arab/Jewish understanding and cooperation, 3) Aiding Jews in need in Israel and throughout the world, 4) Assisting minority and disadvantaged populations in Israel, and 5) Supporting environmental efforts in Israel. Following the establishment of Moshav Nahalal as our partnership community, we added a priority of strengthening our relationship there and in the Central Galilee region where it sits.

Examples of projects funded by our Annual Community Campaign over the years include:

Job training and development for women in Druze villages

Hand in Hand Schools, in which Arab and Jewish citizens of Israel learn together

Many other projects which foster cooperation and understanding among Jews and Arabs through education, mediation, and community building

Youth Futures, a project of the Jewish Agency, which supports at-risk youth and their families. The specific project we fund is based in Nazareth and serves Jews from all religious backgrounds, including Christians and Muslims.

Krembo Wings, a youth movement for children of all abilities (and backgrounds) that serves the communities of Nazareth and Nof HaGalil.

Welfare relief in Argentina during their economic crisis in the 2000s and currently in the former Soviet Union, where it is still greatly needed.

In 2023, we were proud to make the decision to support an organization called Road to Recovery (R2R) for the first time. R2R is an Israeli association of volunteers who drive Palestinian patients, primarily children, from checkpoints in the West Bank and Gaza for lifesaving treatments in Israeli hospitals. On October 7, R2R leaders and volunteers living in the Gaza envelope were murdered and/or kidnapped by Hamas terrorists, and the program was severely crippled. Hopefully, in the future, the community will be able to, once again, support this important endeavor.

Some of our allocations funds are sent via our parent organization — Jewish Federations of North America — to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) which helps Jews in need around the world and in Israel, and to the Jewish Agency, the largest single funder of non-Haredi streams of Judaism in Israel. Among many other projects, the Jewish Agency manages the Fund for Victims of Terror, which provides terror victims from all segments of Israeli society with short and long-term support, as well as a myriad of programs aimed at "building bonds of peoplehood" with Jewish communities around the world, something Mr. Ben-Baruch suggests is vital.

The Allocations Committee and the Board of Directors of our local Jewish Federation constantly reevaluate processes for funding both local and overseas projects, and we continue to be proud of our efforts to support those in Israel working to build a stronger shared civil society for all.

Since the establishment of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor in the mid-1980s, our community has seen tremendous growth. Our mission is to provide and inspire philanthropic leadership and community-building to nurture a strong, engaged, connected, caring, vibrant, and enduring Jewish community in greater Ann Arbor, in Israel, and around the world. An essential component of this mission is to support strong, flourishing local Jewish organizations, programs, and initiatives. The Federation will continue to do so, even as we continue to provide strong support for Israel and for Jews around the world.! ■

From the Editor *continued from page 2*

Obviously, my mood is pensive. But it doesn't remain there, in large part because I open my inbox and find resilience and creativity, hope.

I was happy to receive a submission from Zachary Weissman, whom I remember when he was in preschool, about visiting Chelm during his year in London as an exchange student. I hope he'll send more of his thoughtful observations. In this issue also you'll find the first installment of Lauren Zinn's expansive manuscript "Belong to the world, bring your tribe."

The remainder of this June issue of the WJN is filled with tidbits of Jewish life in Washtenaw.

I do want to comment further on the exchange that began with Benjamin Ben Baruch's piece in the May issue of the WJN, "A short history of Jewish communal fund raising in Ann Arbor." Eileen Freed, CEO of the Greater Ann Arbor Jewish Federation, wrote a response to Benjy, which you can find on page 7.

I met Benjy Ben Baruch in the 1980s in meetings of the New Jewish Agenda (NJA) National Council in New York. It was then, even though I didn't yet live in Michigan, that I listened to Benjy's reports of being able to bring to Ann Arbor's nascent communal fundraising apparatus the concerns of those of us who were organizing for Israeli and Palestinian mutual recognition.

I asked Benjy to write the "short history" for the WJN because he had been present and helped to shape an early effort to democratize our community. In the 1980s, NJA had over one hundred members and supporters in Ann Arbor. We are all grey-haired now, and like Benjy and I, some are no longer living in the area, and others are no longer living. Now, as our community embarks on devising strategies for the future (the Community Strategic Plan), we know that there are many, many more who are young and/or unaffiliated and many who are questioning how they want to relate to Israel and Zionism. Democratizing the community means including them in the Community Strategic Plan. Perhaps it will be helpful to know that how things are structured now is not how they always have been.

Democratizing the community means having open discussion and respectful debate, and I appreciate Eileen's response to Benjy. His memory of events more than 40 years ago is fairly accurate according to other people Eileen talked to. Benjy mentions the "Jewish Ethical Giving Guide" which included guiding principles for giving to Israel:

The distribution of funds should not discriminate between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel, and

The money should not support Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

The story of the Jewish Ethical Giving Guide will be expanded on in a future issue of WJN.

Why does this history matter? Does it matter? What would an ethical giving guide for 2025 look like? Is there usefulness in a discussion, or a debate, about whether most of the money American Jews sent to the Jewish Agency in the 1980s went to supporting the settlements in the West Bank? Can it help us now to stop the bombing, or help us wake up to the mutual recognition that must, indeed, happen? ■

A special week for Israel

By Rachel Wall, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbo

Israeli flags were plentiful at the Israeli Block Party.

During the Israeli Block Party, the hallway of the JCC was transformed into an Israeli-style shuk featuring jewelry hand-made by Israeli artists

The last week of April was a special week for Israelis. Yom HaZikaron (Israel's Memorial Day) and Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Israeli Independence Day) took place and were commemorated and celebrated in Israel and in the Jewish community in greater Ann Arbor.

On the evening of May 1, nearly 250 people gathered at the JCC for a high-energy Israeli Block Party, in celebration of Yom Ha'Atzmaut. While originally planned as an outdoor affair, unpredictable weather meant the event was held largely indoors, which did not detract from the lively, communal feel of the night. With a New York-based band playing modern Israeli music, plus Israel-themed art projects, games, interactive art, and even a petting zoo, every participant left with a smile on their face. Many in attendance noted they had never seen the JCC as full of both people and energy.

"It was a blast!" said Amichay Findling, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor's Israel and Overseas Programs Manager. "I'm so grateful for the work of the Federation team, in partnership with the JCC and Hebrew Day School, to make this event such a success."

The event followed a meaningful Yom HaZikaron ceremony two evenings before, held at Beth Israel Congregation. The ceremony was led by representatives from multiple synagogues and organizations throughout Ann Arbor. Eileen Freed, CEO of the Jewish Federation, described the gathering as "a truly moving commemoration."

The ceremony resonated even deeper thanks to participation from a delegation of two IDF officers visiting from Israel. During their 5 days in Michigan, the officers shared their stories at synagogues, individual homes, offices, Jewish War Veterans of Michigan, and with state elected officials in Lansing, engaging approximately 200 eager listeners. Some of them, such as Michigan State Senator Lana Theis and Representative Jenn Conlin, are decision-makers of high public standing. Others, such as the Hebrew Day School's fourth and fifth graders, had impactful conversations that may affect the learners' views on Israel and Israelis for the rest of their lives.

The officers, Dar and Alam, are Israeli heroes who took active part in the fighting following the October 7 massacre. Dar, an artillery officer who was on leave before retiring from military work in his early 30s, rushed into battle on the morning of October 7. Using randomly salvaged combat equipment, Dar rescued 54 survivors from the Nova Festival massacre site. Alam, an infantry company leader, led his troops through 7 months of fighting in Gaza, losing comrades and subordinates, while recovering vital information about hostages and diminishing Hamas' fighting capabilities. Both are now safe in Israel, continuing their important work.

Reflecting further on the Yom HaZikaron ceremony, Freed said, "The soldiers' contributions, the musical pieces, the moving stories all combined for a very meaningful evening. The environment and communal engagement in the building were unlike anything I have ever seen here before. It really made it feel like we were at a Yom Hazikaron tekes (Israeli-style commemoration)." ■

The Yom HaZikaron ceremony included moving musical performances by community members.

Weissman in Chelm continued from page 1

and my palm left what seemed at the time to be a permanent indentation on my forehead when the village elders tried to capture the moon in a barrel of borscht. I felt the chill of the air when the town's grownups carried all the children home from school so as not to ruin the perfectly formed layer of snow, and I cringed with mild horror when I learned that a local farmer had been planting the chicks he had bought from the market as though they were cabbage seeds. But these observations were always just that: observations. I was watching from the margins of a book, present, but never a participant. Now, finally, I would get the chance to partake in the absurdities of Chełm: I would get to walk its cobbled streets, climb its hills and marvel at its fields. And so, I boarded my train from Lublin to Chełm buzzing with anticipation.

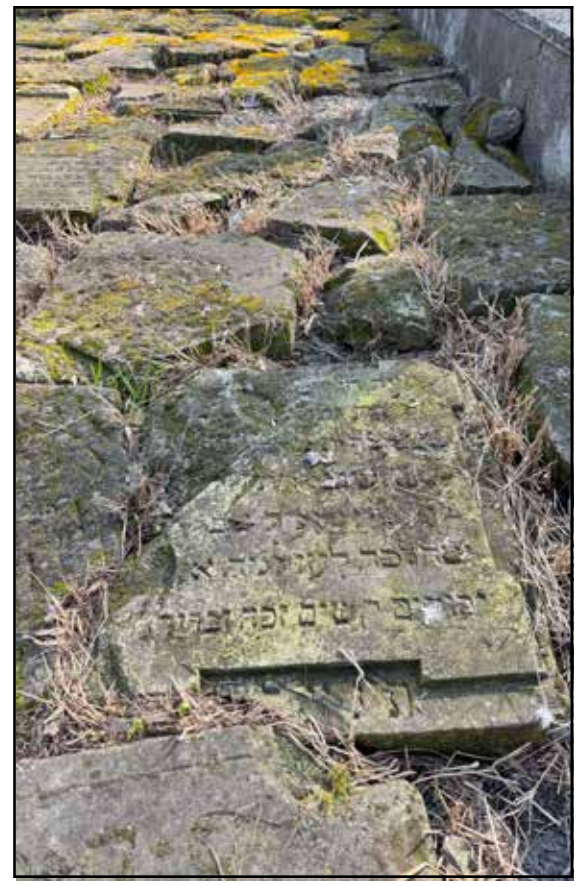
I wrote the first draft of this piece while in a café in Chełm, trying to make sense of the day's experience. At first, visiting Chełm in person felt as though a figment of my childhood imagination had been realized: signs that read "Witamy w Chełmie!", medieval buildings and a cobbled town square: even a novelty Chełm monopoly board in the town's only bookstore; walking through the Friday morning market it seemed the town was fully alive. No longer was I forced to clandestinely steal stories from the pages of a book I had smuggled into my room past my bedtime! I could join the stories; I could be a Wise Man! I felt fulfilled, satisfied, excited all at once; it seemed like any moment a minyan of old Jewish wise men would make their way around a corner, deep in discussion about the most prudent solution to an utterly absurd dilemma. But with this excitement — this expectation, even — a knot began to form in my stomach. Because I knew that no matter which corner I turned I would find no gaggle of wise men with wisdom to impart, nor anyone unto whom it might be imbued.

Because there are no more wise men in Chełm.

I knew this because there are no Jews in Chełm, not anymore. There have been no Jews in Chełm since the Chełm Ghetto was "liquidated" in 1942. The cobbled square was filled with people taking in the early spring sunshine, and yet I was completely and utterly alone; the lone "Weissman" in all of Chełm.

As I walked through Chełm, hoping to catch a glimpse of something — anything — I recognized from the Chełm I had visited so many times through the pages of a dozen different books, the knot that had been forming in my stomach disappeared. It took with it the elation, the excitement, the satisfaction of finally being in Chełm, leaving only a deep, unrelenting absence. Because I wasn't in Chełm; not really. There were no synagogues, and there were no wise men; nor were there any plaques, nor statues, nor monuments to suggest that there had ever been any wise men of Chełm. With the annihilation of Chełm's Jews — 15,000 of the town's 33,000 residents — so too disappeared the Chełm I knew. Five hundred years of Jewish history, 500 years of Jewish life; all of it gone.

The emptiness, the complete erasure of any evidence that a Jewish Chełm had existed at all — let alone for 500 years — affected me in a way that no Holocaust museum ever has. When visiting Auschwitz I knew I would see evidence of suffering beyond description at a scale beyond comprehension — and I did. The horrors experienced by our people transcend the boundaries of language and the level of depravity seems to defy the



nature of the universe itself. The unending displays of shoes, each pair a testament to a life lost; the scratches left by their owners on the walls of the gas chambers as they fought desperately to survive; the evidence of these atrocities (and many more besides) made me physically ill and have never truly left my thoughts in the years since I saw them.

And yet, our people survived. Because while each pair of shoes does indeed represent a life lost, each pair is also evidence of a life once lived; while those who left the scratches on the concrete walls of the gas chamber in Auschwitz-Birkenau-I were unable to carve their way out, they succeeded in etching their existence into the story of humanity, ensuring that their lives will never be forgotten.

In Chełm, there is nothing so visibly evil, nothing so obviously terrible; there is simply nothing. Chełm is what the world would be like if the Nazis had succeeded. It is the absence of our existence, the erasure of our story; the existential horror of never having existed at all.

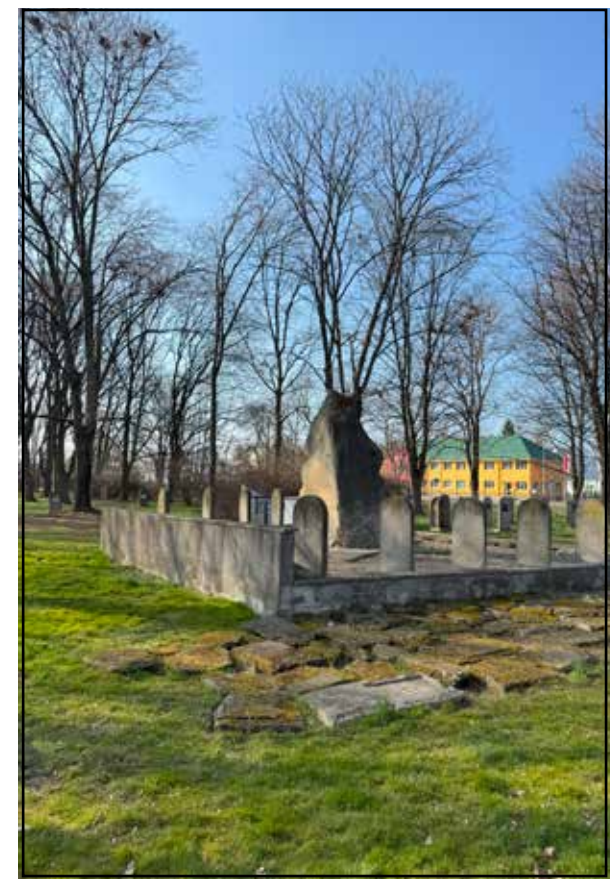
As I was walking to catch my overnight train to Ukraine from the train station at the edge of town, I came across a large lot surrounded by a grey, cast-iron fence marked periodically by the remains of overgrown shrubs. As I rounded the corner, I noticed with some surprise that it was the entrance to an old cemetery — and judging by Stars of David wrought in the black cast iron of the front gate — a Jewish one. It was the first time I had seen a single shred of evidence resembling the Chełm I thought I knew.

I entered the cemetery — the gate creaking on its rusted hinges — and walked to the monument in the center, tripping several times on the pitted, uneven ground. The monument consisted of a raised dais, in the middle of which loomed a large stone slab bearing two plaques. The upper, written in Hebrew and Yiddish, roughly translates to "In Memory of the Blessed of the Chełm Region," and the lower reading, "IN MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST 1939–1945" in English and Polish. Behind the stone stood a low wall made of shattered Jewish gravestones.

The rest of the cemetery was poorly maintained, overgrown, and in a state of general disrepair. Scattered memorials placed in the 1990s dotted the uneven grass, along with the occasional pre-war gravestone so worn down by time as to be completely illegible.

The only other point of note was a white wall with a plaque, and a cast iron menorah, just to the right of the central monument. The plaque — only in Polish — read, "JEWS LIVED IN CHELM FROM 1440–1942." Lived. Past tense.

I will never go back to Chełm. Instead, I will return only to Chełm, the town where our people will never be forgotten; the town where we are the story — a Chełm from which we could never be erased. ■



Cooking for the co-op

By Lonnie Sussman

I've always said that food is about stories. Sometimes the stories are the culture or history of a particular food or of a particular dish. Sometimes the stories are about the cook (mom? dad? grandparent? friend?). Are the stories about where you were when you ate a dish or with whom you ate it? Often there is a meaningful conversation going on with eating. In all these cases there are memories of the times and places and people we cooked and ate with.

Back in March I went to an interesting program titled "Taste the World." It was part of the University of Michigan's "Inclusive History Project" which is studying how various ethnic groups experienced their years at the university. Karla Goldman, from the Jewish Communal Leadership Program (JCLP) at the School of Social Work, was the interviewer/facilitator of the three speakers who were young Jewish students at U of M in the mid-60s. While they all worked in restaurants during their school years, it was only later that they became famous for their roles as writers and, one of them, as a businessman in the food world. Ruth Reichel went on to become an editor of ***Gourmet Magazine***, Joan Nathan went on to write many cookbooks, mostly on Jewish food and traditions, and Ari Weinzweig went on to co-found Zingerman's and the many other businesses that have grown from the original business. Their stories were about their years at Michigan, the jobs they had in food services, and the lessons in life learned from those years. It had me thinking about those times as well.

I also went to college in the mid to late 60s at U of M. I was influenced by the "vibe" of that time, the war in Vietnam, and the energy of the Summer of Love. If you went to U of M., you might remember the store selling "health" foods or the restaurants serving vegetarian food. The People's Food Co-op began in 1971 and Seva opened in 1973. It's amazing that they are still around. Of course, not everyone was eating based on all the new theories about health. Some of us learned to cook with recipes from our families, so meat and pastas were still being cooked in our apartments and there was even some experimentation with foods from Asia and India. Anyhow, it's been fun reminiscing about those years.

Diane and I have been friends for over 40 years, and I recently learned something new about her. As we were talking about the event described above, she mentioned she cooked in her co-op at Oberlin College. What?! The co-op system offered cheaper housing, but it included the students doing all the cooking and cleaning. Diane was the bread baker. She told me she made all the bread at night so that it was ready for the next day. What an incredible feat. Diane and friends put together the recipes used for all the meals along with charming and humorous drawings and clever names for some of the dishes. The recipes are for 60 people, or for 6. I have her permission to share some of the recipes and the name of the student who provided each one.

Applesauce Meatloaf

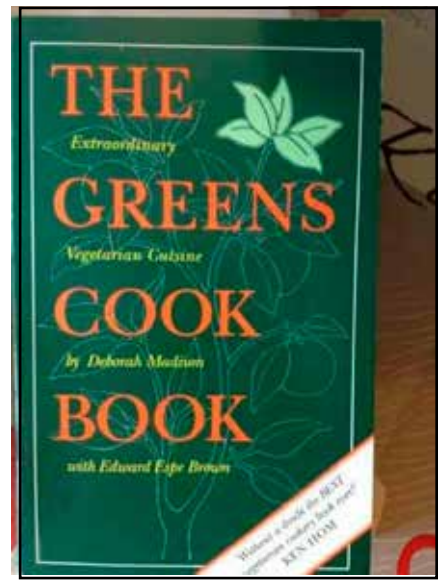
The Co-op Cookbook, recipe included by Grace Kirchner

Serves 6.

I found several recipes in other places that use applesauce as an ingredient to provide moisture.

2 lb ground beef
½ tbs sage
1 tbs Worcestershire sauce
½ tsp salt
Pepper to taste
2 cups applesauce
1½ cups breadcrumbs

Mix all ingredients together and place in a loaf pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes



Orange Tea Rolls

The Co-op Cookbook, recipe included by Diane Kaplan

Makes 2 dozen

Dough
1¾ cups milk
¾ cup sugar
1 tsp salt
1 tbs grated orange rind
¾ cup butter
2 packages yeast
3 eggs
5 cups flour

Topping
⅓ cup butter
1⅓ cup orange juice
1 cup sugar
1 tbs grated orange rind
2 tbs vanilla extract

Combine the first 5 ingredients in a saucepan and heat until the butter melts and the milk is scalded. Let cool to lukewarm, then stir in the yeast. Beat in the eggs and half the flour and beat for a minute or two or until the mixture is smooth. Now beat in the rest of the flour. Cover and let batter rise until doubled. While it is rising, make the topping. Combine the butter, orange juice, sugar and the orange rind in a saucepan, and heat and stir for several minutes. Add the vanilla (the original recipe uses rose-geranium leaves). Pour this syrup into about 2 muffin tins (for a total of 2 dozen muffins). Stir the batter down and spoon it into the muffin tins, filling them about ½ full. Cover and let the batter rise again until it reaches the tops of the tins. Bake at 350 degrees until browned and done, about 20 minutes. Turn out of tins immediately, and serve hot.

Phil Rutter's Herb Bread

The Co-op Cookbook

1 loaf

Cottage cheese also shows up in many recipes from the 60s and 70s. It provides moisture, taste, substance, and maybe it was inexpensive.

1 tsp sugar
1 pkg yeast
1 cup cottage cheese
1 egg
2 tbs sugar
1 tsp salt
2 tsp dill weed (or use 1 tsp fresh dill)
1 tbs chopped onion
1 tbs oil
¼ tsp baking soda
2½ cups flour

Mix warm water, 1 tsp of sugar, and yeast. Heat the cottage cheese until quite warm but do not boil. (This is how the recipe is written but it was written before microwave ovens.) Beat together the eggs, the 2 tbs sugar, salt, dill weed (or fresh), onion, oil, baking soda in a bowl, and then add the yeast and cottage cheese. Beat in 1 cup of the flour for 5 minutes. Then add the rest of the flour and stir to mix, do not knead. Cover and let rise for 1 hour. Punch down and turn into a small, greased casserole dish or a large loaf pan. Let rise 20 more minutes until doubled in size and bake at 325 degrees for about 45 minutes. Turn out the bread on a rack to cool.

Almond Croquets

Vegetarian Gourmet Cookery by Alan Hooker

Recipes from The Ranch House restaurant. This cookbook is from 1970 as the public learned more about healthy foods and vegetarianism.

Serves 6

2 cups raw, unblanched almonds, ground in blender or food processor
½ cup wheat germ
½ cup raw sesame seeds
1 small onion, minced or 4 green onions, minced
1 clove garlic, minced
8 oz cottage cheese (another example of the use of cottage cheese.)
2 eggs
1 tsp nutritional yeast
1 pinch curry powder
1 tsp salt

Mix everything together and form into cutlets. Fry slowly in butter until crisp on outside

Pasticcio

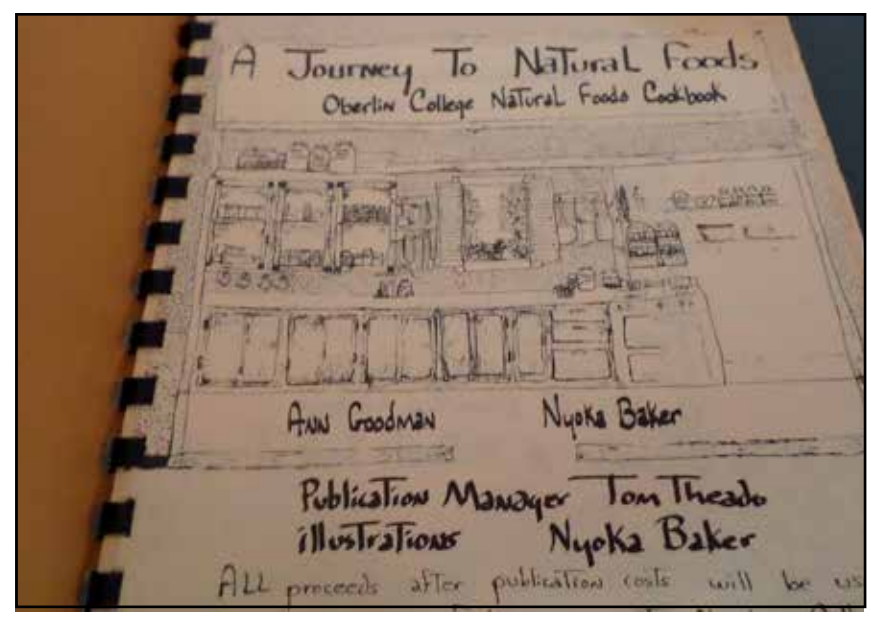
Diet for a Small Planet by Francis Moore Lappe

Serves 3–4

The first edition of this book was in 1971 and it has been updated several times since. The recipe was submitted by Sue Pohl, from Hillsdale, Michigan. It's yet another example of cottage cheese used for savory and sweet dishes (look up cheese kugels). It is also an example of the increasing use of whole wheat and low-fat ingredients.

½ pound macaroni
1 cup lentils
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 medium carrots, finely chopped or grated
2–3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tbs soy sauce
½ tsp rosemary
2¼ cups water
2 cups low-fat cottage cheese
¼ cup whole wheat flour
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 egg
1 cup low-fat milk
1 tsp salt (optional)
½ tsp nutmeg
1 tsp cinnamon
Topping: wheat or bran flakes or breadcrumbs.

Cheese sauce: In a bowl, combine the cottage cheese, flour, and add what's left over of the onion after the ½ cup used with the lentils, the Parmesan cheese, egg, milk, salt, nutmeg, and cinnamon. Cook the macaroni until al dente, drain, and set aside. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a saucepan, cook the lentils with ½ cup onion, carrots, garlic, soy sauce, rosemary, and water until the water is absorbed, about 20 minutes. Pour half the macaroni into a 9x9 baking pan or casserole. Pour over it a third of the cheese sauce, then a layer of the lentils, topped with another third of the sauce. Add remaining macaroni and top with the remaining sauce. Sprinkle on topping for a crusty texture. Bake for 35 minutes or until browned.



Continued on page 11

Bellflower, fine dining Ypsi-style

By Candace Bulkley and Trina Fuller, with guest Betsy Mark

Candace and Trina became friends in the Temple Beth Emeth adult b-mitzvah class that graduated in 2022. They will be honing their palates, visiting, and writing about a variety of independent, locally owned Washtenaw County restaurants, catering to a variety of dietary preferences.

In downtown Ypsilanti, tucked in on Pearl Street just across from the bus depot, you will find Bellflower, one of the most delightful culinary experiences available in the area. Featuring local craft products from field, farm, and stream, when possible, Bellflower leans toward Cajun and Creole cuisines of Louisiana but not exclusively. With a menu that changes daily, you can expect beautifully executed plates that are big on flavor and creativity. This month, we had a special guest diner. We offered the opportunity to dine with us in the Temple Beth Emeth Religious School Purim Silent Auction. The winning bidder, Betsy Mark, accompanied us for dinner and was lovely company at our table, as well as being an adventurous taster.

Upon entering the restaurant, you will find the sandwich counter just inside the door, which operates during extended lunch hours when the main dining room is not open. Just beyond that is the open kitchen where eager diners can watch the cooks working their culinary magic while waiting for a table. Bellflower offers three dining areas; indoors, the outdoor patio which is open when the weather cooperates, and the light and airy enclosed patio, where we were seated. It was a lovely setting for a warm spring evening. Often outdoor dining furniture is an afterthought — not here, it was aesthetically pleasing and most importantly was comfortable.

Bellflower bakes their own milk bread every day; the pride in this product is on full display as the process for baking it is painted on the wall in the lobby. We tasted its tender crumb for the first time as an accompaniment to our appetizer, the Stilton blue cheese plate, which was served with toasted marcona almonds, drizzled with local Klein honey, and thinly cut local apple slices from Wolfe orchard. The pungent cheese tempered with delicate honey was a perfect way to start our meal, as was our cocktail selection — the Root Awakening containing Tito's vodka expertly mixed with apricot liqueur, carrot juice, lemon, and tamarind. It was a refreshing and creative use of ingredients, and the perfect substitute for a salad! The drink menu at Bellflower offers an intriguing selection of flavor profiles, and respectfully offers a list of alcohol-free drinks that won't leave you feeling like you have had dessert before your meal arrives.

Our trio of diners ordered four entrees from the daily offerings; Pemaquid mussels, whole cornmeal trout, seashell pasta, and aloo gobi. The plump, super fresh tasting Pemaquid mussels were served in a flavorful spicy shrimp bisque and more of that homemade milk bread, which was perfect for sopping up every drop of the delicious Crystal hot sauce-kissed broth. For someone who usually eats mussels once a year during summer vacation on the east coast, this was a divine preview of summer. You'd never know you were in Michigan!

The whole cornmeal trout was an absolute stunner — the perfectly cooked, golden crusted Eagle Creek trout, from Jackson, Michigan, was topped with a perfectly fried duck egg from Chelsea's Old Brick Farm, roasted beets, mild and sweet hakurei turnips, and a pungent garlic aioli. The trout was moist and mild in flavor and the runny yolk from the duck egg created its own rich sauce which was excellent with the aioli. Because it was served whole, there were a few bones in the trout, which is expected.

We mentioned Bellflower leans toward Cajun and Creole cuisines of Louisiana but not exclusively — enter aloo gobi, a traditional dish from northern India. The Bellflower interpretation uses potatoes (fried) from Holtz Farm in Ida, Michigan, tender green peas, roasted cauliflower, all bathed in a coconut milk sauce scented with cumin, coriander, and cardamom, served with fluffy rice. We found ourselves going back time and again for one more bite of this fragrant, slightly spicy vegan and gluten-free entree. Chef Dan Klenotic

has transformed this traditional Indian dish into a localized, modern version without losing its essence.

Our final entree was the seashell pasta made with local Dave Makes Pasta, topped with creamy bechamel and Old Brick Farms duck ragu. Chef Klenotic makes use of another local product with fresh basil from Sell Farms in Ypsilanti, salty pecorino cheese and — lucky for us — more milk bread. This dish, which could have been made heavy and clunky by the overuse of its rich ingredients, was handled by deft hands. It was a triumph. The quality, flavor, and texture of the artisan pasta was outstanding. The toothsome seashells stood up beautifully to the hearty duck ragu and held onto the creamy bechamel sauce. All of this was tied together with a fragrant basil chiffonade and a flourish of cheese. Great ingredients speak for themselves. We suggest seeking out Dave Makes Pasta online and supporting his artisanal pasta business.

Somehow we managed to save just enough room to share the bread pudding — which was the only dessert on the menu. Usually a dense, caramel and bourbon sauce laden dessert bomb, we were in wonder with this exceptionally light more delicate version. Perfectly sized to be shared after a hearty dinner and made from the house-made milk bread, the pudding was served warm with a touch of amber hued maple syrup and lightly sweetened fresh whipped cream on top. It was lovely and impressive in its simplicity.

We truly enjoyed every bite of our meal at Bellflower. It's a fine dining experience where jeans and t-shirts are the typical attire — the food is what really shines. Bellflower features local ingredients and a daily menu that changes based on what's in season and available at the market. Our server was friendly and efficient, and importantly the food delivery was well timed. After an ill-timed opening during the pandemic in 2020, the nationally recognized restaurant has blossomed and become an integral part of the area's dining scene. Bellflower is open for lunch at the sandwich counter, and dinner in the restaurant, Tuesday through Saturday. On Sundays, a special brunch menu is available from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in addition to dinner service. Parking is plentiful on the street and in a lot across Pearl St.

Bellflower, 209 Pearl St., Ypsilanti, https:/bellflowerypsi.com/ ■

Kosher Cuisine Continued from page 10

Brown Rice Casserole

The Greens Cookbook by Deborah Madison and Edward Espe Brown

This iconic book was written in 1987, a few years past the earliest efforts of the new natural foods movement. It seems to be the grown-up version of some of the foods celebrated as healthy a decade earlier. Brown rice was an important ingredient, and some diets claimed miracles for eating it. This recipe also includes tofu, another new food, in this country, during that time.

Serves 4–6

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

1 ½ cup brown rice. Cook the rice in 2⅔ cups of water, with ½ tsp salt and 2 tbs butter or olive oil. Rinse the rice and drain. Cook in a heavy saucepan with the water, salt, and butter or olive oil. Bring to a boil and then cover the pot with a tight lid and reduce heat to low. Cook for about 45 minutes.

Half block of tofu (about 8–9 oz) Place on a slanted board to drain while you prepare and chop the next ingredients into roughly ½ inch pieces.

1 large onion
2 medium carrots
2 stalks celery
1 green pepper
2 medium zucchini or other summer squash
6 oz mushrooms, quartered or smaller if they are large
Cut the tofu into ½ inch cubes
1 tbs olive oil
1 tbs butter
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 tsp nutritional yeast
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp salt
1 cup mushroom or vegetarian broth or water
6 oz grated cheese, your favorite
Pepper to taste
Fresh herbs for garnish – parsley or thyme

Heat the olive oil and butter and fry the onion over medium heat until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic, nutritional yeast, cumin, and salt, and stir until blended. Cook for 1 minute then add the carrots, celery, and the green pepper. Add ½ cup liquid and cover the pan. Allow the vegetables to soften, about 5 minutes. Next add the zucchini and the mushrooms and cook another 7–10 minutes. If the pan gets too dry, add a little more liquid. Gently combine the vegetables with the rice and cheese and season with salt and pepper. Use a casserole or large baking pan (9x11 or so), lightly buttered or oiled, and add a small amount of water. Then add all the other ingredients and put them in the casserole. Cover with aluminum foil and bake about ½ hour. Serve with the fresh herbs. ■

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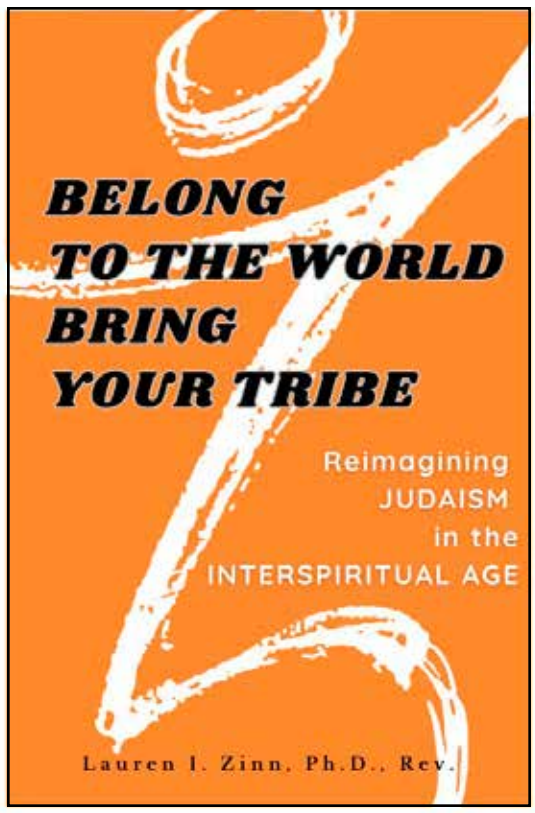
Belong to the World continued from page 1



ligion in the public sphere is not immune to this phenomenon which is manifesting as a form of nationalism.

Since this book is about reimagining our religions in the age of a new consciousness, with Judaism as an example, it's important to acknowledge the rise of religious nationalism not only in the U.S. but across the world. We see it as Christian Nationalism in the USA, political Zionism in Israel-Palestine, Majoritarian Buddhism in Myanmar, Christian Nationalism in Hungary, and Islamist Islam in Arab nations, etc.

If the United States becomes an ethno-fascist state, we can expect a violent form of white Christian Nationalism to dominate society. Indeed, Christian Nationalists admit to their aim of keeping people of other religions, including Catholics and non-conforming Christians, out of government and politics. But the leaders of this movement may find such government unsustainable. Here's a parable as to why.

When asked what gift each religion brings to the world, Rabbi Zalman Shachter-Shalomi gave the following analogy using Judaism as the example: "I believe that Gaia is whole and that every religion is like a vital organ of the planet. You cannot say that Earth can be alive with only the heart or with only the kidneys or with only the guts. It needs to have the whole thing. So if, for instance, I were to say, 'We [Judaism] are the liver,' ... if we're going be a good liver, then the heart will be able to mend, the lungs will be able to mend, and so on and vice versa. [We need all the organs/religions.] If [other organs/religions] will be able to renew Christianity or Islam or Buddhism in their own way so that it'll be a vitally contributory element to the wholeness of life on this planet; that's wonderful."

Just as the body needs different organs to live, and the planet needs biodiversity to flourish, so does humanity need spiritual variety. Each religion contributes to the whole. Without inclusivity, there is no diversity. Without variety, there is no affirming of life.

The regression we see today is a form of resistance to humanity's spiritual, natural, evolutionary growth. For we are all evolving into a new consciousness. Adulting — individually or collectively — can be hard. And so we are in the throes of resistance, and it is manifesting in forms of authoritarian government, oligarchies, and religious nationalism. I believe this is part of evolution's process, a precursor to our spiritual expansion.

As consciousness expands, we outgrow older forms or ways of doing things. And, just as children outgrow clothes and need new ones, we too need new forms and new frames for seeing the world from this new stage of consciousness. Our forms — systems, measures, technologies, models, etc. — are beginning to reflect the values of our newly emerging worldview. While it's a tumultuous time, it's also promising since we can expect a harmonization of the conflicting values that precede a newly emerging worldview.

This new consciousness has different names, including: Integral Consciousness. Integral Spirituality. Spiritual Pluralism. Progressive post-postmodernism. Whatever name sticks, it will build on the interfaith movement that has developed since 1893 with the first World Parliament of Religions (Chicago).

Philosopher Steve McIntosh writes, "... the culture of integral spirituality is found in the growing agreement about the importance of spiritual experience." The movement will override the limitations of polite pluralism and expose unifying spiritual principles of all faiths. Our consciousness will gain energy from those religions that explore common spiritual truths and experiences. The antidote to religious nationalism and that which can help us evolve our consciousness lies with the practices and experiences of an interspiritual life.

Ironically, the way out of religious nationalism is through religion, but not one, all. Through all religions we will find solidarity in common spiritual experiences.

The good news is that we are not starting from scratch. The Interspiritual Age, when such solidarity will flourish, is underway. It is the natural extension of interfaith marriage, interfaith dialogue, multicultural education, multifaith prayers, interreligious studies, etc.

We see the Interspiritual Age blossom on college campuses when students benefit from Eboo Patel's Interfaith Youth Corps as they learn about each other's religions and are inspired to learn about their own. We see it when students find common ground working on social justice issues. We see it in Auburn Seminary when clergy of different faiths come together to share strategies for successful social change. We see it in The Interfaith Leadership Council of Metro Detroit's Religious Diversity Journeys program for middle schoolers in Detroit's public schools. (Students visit different worship sites and learn about the religion practiced there.) We see it in the social studies of a North Carolina public school district led by Tim Hall who created a website of resources to help teachers teach about our world's religions. We see it in Brian Carwara's Encounter World Religions, a program that teaches teachers, employers, and police forces about religions and why it's important to understand them. We see it in The Tanenbaum Center's programs for teachers, workers, healthcare providers, and peacemakers to understand religions. We see it in Europe, where Religion Education or RE courses are required in public high schools. All of these efforts help improve religious literacy in public life and the global community.

In the private sphere, however, where religion is taught through churches, mosques, temples, synagogues, etc., new forms are needed for the new age. Indeed, without new forms, traditional religions are expected to become obsolete, as argued by sociologist Christian Smith in his 2025 book, *Why Religions Went Obsolete: The Demise of Traditional Faith in America.*

Some changes are occurring in the traditional religious landscape. For example, traditional seminaries now offer courses in interfaith relations. But these efforts rarely trickle down to youth in the classrooms. Teachers in most after-school religious educational programs (such as Sunday schools) are college students or volunteer members of the affiliated "church." For the most part, religion is still taught from an ethno-centric perspective. In religious day schools, teachers may have additional training in their respective religion, but interfaith experience and religious literacy is not required and sadly, the work of interfaith educators is largely dismissed. It is from within the field of interfaith education and interspiritual experience that traditional religion might find salvation and renewed interest from a public hungry for spirituality.

I see a time when all the world's religions are practiced from a newly emerging consciousness that transcends inherent ethnic tribalism and its sibling, nationalism. I see people engaging with religions from an enthusiasm found by recognizing the universal spiritual truths in all.

My authority to share a reimagination of religion with Judaism as an example comes from modern rabbinic training, ordination as an Interfaith Minister, experience leading a Jewish-Interfaith congregation, running an independent Sunday School, and serving on various interfaith and religion education boards or committees.

Prior to this work, I earned an interdisciplinary PhD that resulted in teaching children of all ages, college students, teachers, and trainers in a range of subjects (educational methods, ethics, psychology, philosophy, and gaming/futures design). I see the world through the eyes of a philosopher of history who believes human consciousness develops continuously toward higher states and always with an impulse for the Good. The education of religion is a sector of our society where the growth of consciousness can be enhanced. This book argues for doing and teaching religion from this new perspective. Are religions serving people in ways that help us all evolve collectively? Or are they part of the problem?

This book is for people who want to connect to religion but are disillusioned with its current forms. It is also for people who want to connect with Judaism specifically but are disillusioned with its current forms.

The essays that follow invite us to upgrade the world's religions so we don't have to shrink who we are to fit into a "box" we've outgrown. We can be grateful for the forms of our religion that have served us and brought us this far, preserve those that are worthy of growing with us, and release aspects that no longer help. In this way, we and our religions can evolve together.

Part One asks us to Belong to the World where "World" refers to a new level of consciousness. It refers to a time and a place in our history and in our minds that I'm calling the Interspiritual Age. I ask us to engage with religions from a new place and to bravely overcome obstacles to reach it.

Part Two, Bring your Tribe, is a call to members of our respective religious, ethnic, and cultural groups. My fellow tribe members identify as Jewish. Here, I speak about Judaism and Israel-Palestine. To bring your tribe means to bring the teachings of your religion into a new reality frame which can change the emphasis of what is taught and how.

Part Three asks us to Become [fill in your Religion(s)] in the Interspiritual Age. In my case, the religion is Jewish so these essays show how we can "become Jewish" in the sense of including and transcending (Ken Wilber) older forms of "being Jewish." Here, I provide examples for how we might celebrate religion in the Interspiritual Age through holidays. Of course, religions are more than holidays, so while there is more to Judaism than festivals, these are entry points for reimagining new forms of religion in the Interspiritual Age.

Some of the essays in this book are from talks I gave at various interfaith conferences and some are quite new. I have edited and organized them to express the impulse of this moment in humanity's cultural evolution as it pertains to religion and education.. ■

Life & Legacy secures 480 local commitments

By Osnat Gafni-Pappas

In 2020, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor joined efforts with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation (HGF) to establish a legacy-giving program in the greater Ann Arbor area, aiming to ensure the long-term financial health of Jewish community organizations and preserve Jewish life for future generations.

As of May 2025, the program has already secured over 480 legacy commitments with an estimated value of $15.4 million in future and realized gifts, supporting 11 local Jewish organizations such as Temple Beth Emeth, Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor, and Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County into the future.

"Endowments are essential to the health of all our Jewish communal organizations, and the Life & Legacy program provides a mechanism and the structure for this critical work. Our community is so lucky to be a part of it," says Jen Rosenberg, Team Leader for the Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor Legacy Team.

Recently, leaders from greater Ann Arbor joined colleagues from across the U.S. and Canada for the 2025 Life & Legacy Leadership Conference in Springfield, Massachusetts. The conference, presented by the HGF, was designed to provide networking opportunities and share best practices among participants to further efforts to make endowment-building and legacy-giving normative behavior and create sustainable, legacy-giving programs in local communities and organizations.

Jen Rosenberg participated in the conference and reflected on her time there. "I am grateful to have had the opportunity to attend this year's Life & Legacy conference. It was an incredibly inspiring few days! It gave me many practical ideas that I can try out right away." She added, "I also really appreciated the time built in for meaningful conversations and networking — hearing others' experiences and sharing our own was just as valuable as the sessions themselves."

Kathy Sarlson, Life & Legacy's National Director, said in her opening remarks, "When we talk about legacy, we're not just talking about dollars and documents. We're talking about memory and resilience. About how we take the experiences of the past, the hopes of the present, and the dreams of the future — and weave them into something lasting."

Over 220 participants from 40 different communities attended the conference over its two days. Participants represented Jewish Federations, Jewish Community Foundations, synagogues, day schools, JCCs, Hillels, Jewish Family Services, Chabad, and other Jewish communal organizations. Highlights included a keynote by Yossi Prager, Senior Managing Director of the Jewish Funders Network's consulting services, workshops on a variety of topics, small group discussions, and a panel on "Using Emerging Philanthropic Trends to Build a Vibrant Jewish Future." Other conversations and workshops centered the role of social media, digital marketing, and artful conversations, as well as developing strategic partnerships and elevating endowments during annual campaigns.

Sarlson noted that in Life & Legacy's 12 years, more than 42,859 legacy commitments have been secured, with over $260 million already invested in organizational endowment funds — contributing to an estimated future value of $1.8 billion for Jewish communities across North America. All this, from 75 communities and 940 organizations, including synagogues, day schools, community centers, and more. "Legacy giving is transformational," Sarlson reminded participants. "It invites individuals to articulate what matters most. It allows organizations to plan boldly instead of struggling to survive. And it transforms entire communities by creating a shared culture of generosity, purpose, and hope."

The Ann Arbor area organizations who participate in Life & Legacy are: Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan, Beth Israel Congregation, Chabad House, Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies, Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor, Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor, Jewish Cultural Society, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, Temple Beth Emeth, and University of Michigan Hillel.

For more information about the program and how to leave a legacy for the next generation, please contact Community Life & Legacy Manager Osnat Gafni-Pappas at osnat@jewishannarbor.org or 734-773-3538, or visit JewishAnnArbor.org/Life-AndLegacy. ■

Rabbis Corner

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein

The language of the Ten Commandments

By Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, Chabad of Ann Arbor

We will be reading the Ten Commandments on the holiday of Shavous (June 2–3). The climax of the Exodus from Egypt and the purpose for which the world was created was the Revelation on Mount Sinai. It was there that G-d gave the Ten Commandments and the Torah to the Jewish People. In front of the assemblage of every single Jewish man, woman, and child, and in the presence of the souls of every Jew that would be born throughout the millennia, G-d descended on Mount Sinai and said, "I am(anochi) the L-rd your G-d." These historic events are described in the Torah portion, Yitro.

The Midrash points out a curious fact: The word "anochi" is not Hebrew — it is an Egyptian word!

The Ten Commandments are a condensation of all the guiding principles of the Torah. Of these, the first two commandments, "I am the L-rd your G-d" and "You shall have no other gods," have an even greater measure of holiness, for they were heard by the Jews directly from G-d Himself, and not through Moses. The first of these two commandments, by virtue of the order in which it was given, has even more significance. Why, then, did G-d choose to express the most lofty and exalted concept, the "I," the very essence of G-d Himself, in a foreign tongue? Why didn't G-d use the Hebrew word for I — "Ani" — to begin the most important utterance ever heard?

In order to understand this paradox, we must first examine the purpose of the Revelation on Mount Sinai. The Torah was not given to guard the holiness contained in the Hebrew tongue; for this, no G-dly earthshaking Revelation would have been necessary. G-d descended on Mount Sinai for one reason only — to enable us to elevate even the lowest and most mundane aspects of our lives and of the physical world, including the Egyptian language, the spoken words of the Pharoah's nation.

Holiness existed before the Revelation, and Jews had long occupied themselves with the Torah. The innovation of the Revelation was the ability to "fuse" holiness with mundane, to imbue physical matter with spirituality. Even things that were seemingly far removed from the realm of holiness could now be used to bring G-dliness into the world.

The aim of the Revelation is pointedly emphasized by the use of the Egyptian word "anochi." A Jew's daily life involves elevating the physical and transforming it into a vessel for G-dliness. Prayer and Torah study enable us to reach only a limited level of spirituality; elevating that which is base and seemingly trivial, by adhering to the laws of the Torah, enables us to attain even greater heights of holiness.

When we fulfill G-d's will by elevating even the "anochi," as G-d Himself did, we fulfill the purpose of the Torah and carry out the world's Divine plan. ■

June events at Beth Israel

Rabbi Professor Elliot Ginsburg

Everyone is welcome to join Beth Israel for services, classes, and events. Services are being held in person and virtually, unless otherwise noted on the calendar. Below is a list of the links to participate virtually in services at Beth Israel. Beth Israel is live streaming services on the Beth Israel YouTube channel (Beth Israel Congregation AA MI). All links are also available on the Beth Israel homepage (www.bethisrael-aa.org). Please note that passwords are used. Contact the office to get the passwords at office@bethisrael-aa.org.

Shavuot at Beth Israel Congregation

Sunday, June 1

Tikkun Leil Shavuot

Beth Israel is pleased to host this year's Community Tikkun Leil Shavuot. All are welcome to attend sessions on a variety of Jewish topics, led by members of Ann Arbor congregations. Watch for more information and registration on the BIC website.

Shavuot Morning Services

Monday, June 2, and Tuesday, June 3, at 9:30 a.m.

Join us for Shavuot morning services at our synagogue as we celebrate the giving of the Torah. On the second day of Shavuot, our service will include Yizkor, a special memorial prayer to honor and remember our loved ones. We look forward to coming together in prayer, learning, and community during this meaningful holiday.

ISRAEL360 Presents Rabbi Professor Elliot Ginsburg: The Mystical Renewal in 16th Century Safed and Its Contemporary Resonance

Monday, June 16, at 7:30 p.m.

Rabbi Professor Elliot Ginsburg will present "Mystical Renewal in 16th century Safed and its Contemporary Resonance" on Monday evening, June 16. Rabbi Professor Ginsburg will discuss how, in the decades following the expulsion of Jews from the Iberian Peninsula, the small Galilean town of Safed in Israel became the epicenter for a Jewish mystical renaissance: birthing new models for intimate community, ritual creativity, and a new mythos of creation. Out of trauma and dislocation, teachings and practices emerged that altered and enriched the face of Jewish spirituality, providing inspiration to the present day.

Aura of Kabbalat Shabbat

Friday, June 27 at 6 p.m.

A Jewish Renewal-inspired singing service led by Rabbi Aura Ahuvia. The choir, dubbed the "Holy Levites," will be holding a rehearsal at 5:30 p.m. leading right up to and seamlessly into services. All are welcome to attend.

Theology Book Club -— Online

Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Beth Israel Congregation's Theology Book Club welcomes you to join them to read together and discuss books on Jewish thought and beliefs. The books are in English. Contact Paul Shifrin at (248) 514-7276 for more information.

In Person and Online Services

Minyan

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. in the M&M Chapel and online

Sundays at 7:45 p.m. online only

Mondays at 7:45 p.m. online only

Tuesdays at 7:45 p.m. online only

Wednesdays at 7:45 p.m. online only

Thursdays at 7:45 p.m. online only

Friday Evening Services — in person and virtual

Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6 p.m.

Shabbat Morning Services — in person and virtual

Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. ■

Susan Feniger and Forked at the Toledo Jewish Film Festival

By Mary Bilyeu, Community Relations Programming Specialist for the Jewish Federation of Greater Toledo

Have you got plans for Monday evening, July 28? If not, then mark your calendars now. (And if you do, then it's time to reschedule the previous commitment!)

Your friends here at the Jewish Federation of Greater Toledo invite you to take a trip down U.S. 23 to join us for a one-of-a-kind special event, when award-winning celebrity chef Susan Feniger returns to her hometown for our city's premiere showing of the documentary ***Forked*** at the Toledo Jewish Film Festival.

This movie, directed by Susan's longtime life partner Liz Lachman, follows the not-always-linear path it's taken to bring global street food under one roof in Susan's first solo restaurant, Los Angeles' STREET. (It's billed as a "culinary disaster" flick!) Some other famous faces from the food world are also featured: chefs Wolfgang Puck, Bobby Flay, and Mary Sue Milliken, who was once one half, along with Susan, of the legendary Too Hot Tamales on the Food Network.

After the showing, Susan — chef, restaurateur, cookbook author, and dynamic speaker — will be joined by Liz to talk about the movie, the culinary and construction adventures it depicts, what it's like to start from scratch with an entirely new project, and so much more.

Between them, Susan and Liz are a formidable couple who've received countless accolades. The former has won a James Beard Foundation Award, the L.A. Times Jonathan Gold Award, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the California Restaurant Association; she was named co-recipient (along with Mary Sue Milliken) of the Julia Child Award from The Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts. Meanwhile, Liz is a multi-talented Emmy award-winning musician and has won a Golden Reel Award for music editing. Two of her previous short films have won a total of nearly 40 festival awards between them.

Forked is an award winner, too, having been named Best Documentary Feature at both the Chicago Reeling Film Festival and the Poppy Jasper International Film Festival. You can watch the trailer here: forkedthefilm.com/home/#trailer.

The Toledo Film Festival is showing other exceptional movies, as well: ***Bad Shabbos*** on June 30, ***Welcome to Yiddishland*** on July 7, ***Midas Man*** on July 14, and ***Everything's Kosher*** on July 21 (followed by a discussion with director/star Adam Fried). You're welcome to join us for any or all of them!

For more information about the entire Toledo Jewish Film Festival and to purchase tickets to any of the showings, go to jewishtoledo.org/toledo-jewish-film-festival-2025 or call Sherry Majewski at 419-724-0351. ***Forked*** will be shown at 7 p.m. on July 28 at the Lourdes University Franciscan Center, 6832 Convent Blvd., Sylvania. Tickets cost $10 per person; snacks and beverages are included in the admission price. Parking is free.

Thanks to the Stu and Jo-Jo Goldberg Donor Advised Fund for support of the festival. ■

A new Moishe House Pod has opened in Ann Arbor

Interview by Rabbi Joel Goldstein

WJN asked Rabbi Joel Goldstein, who serves as the local Base Rabbi for Mem Global, the parent organization for Moishe House, to do an interview about the new Ann Arbor Moishe House.

Rabbi Joel is an engineer turned rabbi who loves learning. He serves as a faculty member for Yashrut, where he teaches Talmud and Jewish Law to students throughout the world. When not studying or teaching Torah, Joel enjoys spending time with his spouse (Rachel) and his children (Yahra and Gedalia), hiking, obsessing about the Dodgers, and practicing Shotokan Karate.

Moishe Houses and Moishe Pods are home-based hubs for Jewish young adults, created by Jewish young adults. Each Moishe House and Moishe Pod is as unique as its residents. From Shabbat dinners and holiday celebrations to community service projects and casual get-togethers, every program is designed to bring people together in meaningful ways.

There are more than 100 Moishe Houses and Pods around the world.

Rabbi Joel: Introduce yourselves. Who are you, where are you from, how do you spend your time in Ann Arbor?

Mira Mutnick: I'm Mira Mutnick, a Biomedical Engineering PhD student at the University of Michigan. I grew up in a suburb of Atlanta, Georgia, with my family belonging to a conservative synagogue. I went to Hebrew school and Shabbat services at my synagogue until my bat mitzvah. After my bat mitzvah, I volunteered as a madricha for the Hebrew school and occasionally read Torah for High Holidays, but my family and I rarely attended Shabbat services anymore. When I got to college, I longed to reconnect with my Jewish identity and became involved in Hillel and Chabad at Georgia Tech. I went on Birthright my first year, participated in Onward (a summer internship program in Israel), and served as Shabbat Chair of our campus Chabad. Now in grad school, I spend a lot of time in lab, exploring coffee shops, and visiting local nature areas. If I'm not in Ann Arbor, you can catch me at a Detroit Tigers game.

Zoe Wachtel: My name is Zoe Wachtel, and I am a Chemistry PhD student at the University of Michigan. I grew up in Oak Park, Illinois, where my family belonged to a reform synagogue. I regularly attended Hebrew school prior to my bat mitzvah, and then served as a tutor for younger students, preparing them for their b'nei mitzvah until I graduated high school. When I got to college, I wasn't planning to be super involved in the Jewish community, but the more I attended Hillel at the University of Illinois, the more I realized how important it was to be connected to my Jewish identity. During my time in undergrad, I served as the Jewish Education Chair on the student board, led Reform services, and eventually ended up finding myself attending and leading Conservative services. Now that I am in graduate school, most of my time is spent in lab doing research, but you can also find me leading the Conservative minyan at Michigan Hillel, walking my dog at the many parks in Ann Arbor, and attending Michigan sporting events.

RJ: What is a Moishe Pod?

Mira and Zoe: Moishe Houses and Moishe Pods are home-based hubs for Jewish young adults (ages 22–32) by Jewish young adults. Moishe Pods typically consist of about two residents who organize and host various events for the community, from Shabbat dinners to social gatherings, tikun olam activities, and Jewish learning.

RJ: What made you want to form a Moishe Pod?

Mira and Zoe: We wanted to form a Moishe Pod because we felt that there was a need for a young adult community here in Ann Arbor. There are many amazing Jewish organizations here, but often people feel uncomfortable or out of place showing up to a larger organization. With Moishe Pod, the community is smaller and therefore less intimidating. The goal of starting the Ann Arbor Moishe Pod was to create a welcoming space specifically for young adults (recently post-grad or in graduate school) who want to stay connected to their Jewish identities, no matter their observance level.

RJ: How did you meet each other?

Mira and Zoe: We met at a graduate student Shabbat dinner at Michigan Hillel early on in our grad school experience. We initially bonded over being the only women in STEM at our table of law students.

RJ: Tell us about an event you've held and an event you're planning for the Moishe Pod.

Mria and Zoe" We have held a number of events during our first month as a Pod. We had people over for both a Passover Seder and a Shabbat dinner, and we recently hosted a board game afternoon with tons of snacks and games. Later in May, we will be taking a group to Jewish Heritage Night at the Detroit Tigers. In June, we are looking forward to hosting a Shavuot ice cream social and food drive.

RJ: How can people find out more about your Moishe Pod?

Mira and Zoe: We have an instagram! https://www.instagram.com/moishepodannarbor/ and a WhatsApp chat: chat.whatsapp.com/Cph0MSp6SIpCgl38d3GeXg. We can also be found on Mem Global's website: https://memglobal.org/find-a-house/moishe-pod-ann-arbor/

RJ: How do you engage in Jewish Ann Arbor outside of your Moishe Pod?

Mira and Zoe: We are both on Michigan Hillel's JGrad leadership. We both frequent NextGen Ann Arbor events and Jewish Learning with the Base Rabbi (shoutout to Rabbi Joel). Mira is a graduate student on Hillel's governing board. Zoe leads the conservative minyan at Hillel. ■

June Calendar

Always check websites or call for updates before planning to attend anything listed here and for prayer services.

Sunday 1 Omer Day 49
Monday 2 Shavuott

Tuesday 3 Shavuot

Wednesday 4

Thursday 5

Friday 6
Candle Lighting 8:51 p.m.

Saturday 7 Naso
Havdallah 10:01 p.m.

Sunday 8

Monday 9

Tuesday 10

Wednesday 11
Yidish tish: (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): Zoom. About 45 minutes each of conversation and reading. Free and open to all those interested in Yiddish language, literature, and culture, no matter what level of proficiency. For more information, to get the link, and to make certain that we are meeting on a specific day, please email Elliot H. Gertel at egertel@umich.edu at least one day before scheduled meeting day every Wednesday (except major Jewish holidays). 2:00 p.m.

Thursday 12

Friday 13
Candle Lighting 8:54 p.m.

Saturday 14 Behaalotecha
Havdallah 10:05 p.m.

Sunday 15
Jewish Community Meet Up at Top of the Park. 5 p.m.

Monday 16

Tuesday 17
ISRAEL360 Presents: Professor Elliot Ginsburg: The Mystical Renewal in 16th Century Safed and Its Contemporary Resonance ?: BIC. 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday 18
Yidish tish: (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group, see above): Zoom. 2:00 p.m.
ORT America Ann Arbor Spring Donor Dinner. 6 p.m.

Thursday 19

Friday 20
Candle Lighting 8:57 p.m.

Saturday 21 Shlach
Havdallah 10:07 p.m.

Sunday 22

Monday 23

Tuesday 24

Wednesday 25

Thursday 26 Rosh Hodesh Tammuz

Friday 27 Rosh Hodesh Tammuz
Candle Lighting 8:57 p.m.
Climate Action Shabbat: A2JClimate Circle, at TBE. Potluck at 5 p.m. and service at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday 28 Korach
Havdallah 10:08 p.m.

Sunday 29

Monday 30

Phone numbers, websites, and addresses of organizations frequently listed in the calendar:

Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan (AAOM): 1429 Hill Street, 248-408-3269, annarborminyan.org

Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-445-1910, aarecon.org

Beth Israel Congregation (BIC): 2000 Washtenaw Ave, 734-665-9897, bethisrael-aa.org

Chabad House: 715 Hill Street, 734-995-3276, jewmich.com

Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies (EMU): www.emich.edu/jewish-studies/

Frankel Center: 202 S. Thayer St., lsa.umich.edu/judaic/

Jewish Community Center (JCC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 745-971-0990, jccannarbor.org

Jewish Cultural Society (JCS): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-975-9872, jewishculturalsociety.org

Jewish Family Services (JFS): 2245 South State Street, 734-769-0209, jfsannarbor.org

Jewish Federation: 2939 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-677-0100, jewishannarbor.org

Pardes Hannah: 2010 Washtenaw Ave, 734-761-5324, pardeshannah.org

Temple Beth Emeth (TBE): 2309 Packard Road, 734-665-4744, templebethemeth.org

UM Hillel: 1429 Hill Street 734-769-0500, michiganhillel.org

Letter to the Editor

Cancelling the party in Ann Arbor

There are many versions of bigotry and ignorance. There are the obvious ones — loud, scary mobs. And then there are the less flashy, and no less harmful, versions. It is this second type that Jewish students in Ann Arbor just faced.

But, first, a very benign, yet instructive example:

A teenager is planning a big house party. The new kid in the class isn't invited but hears about it from classmates. The host's parents urge her to invite the new kid: "What's one more kid? It would be so nice to include him!" The host thinks this through, looks at all the preparation she has done, reviews the list of great friends coming, even listens to the playlist she prepared for the party.

Faced with a choice of everyone — plus new kid — coming to the party, or nobody getting to come to the party, the teenager host chooses the latter. No party for anyone.

Think of the stories — obviously much more horrific — that some of us heard from our parents or grandparents: In April 1960, 16 Black high school students tried to use the all-white Danville, Virginia Memorial Library. In response, the city closed the library. After a federal court ordered the city to re-open the library, it did — but removed all the tables and chairs. Other towns drained their pools when ordered to integrate. Some cities closed their zoos completely.

The people in charge looked at their options and cancelled the party. Decades later, those children — who couldn't swim, or couldn't sit down to read their books, or never did get to a high school party — are now grown adults who can still recall that trauma and pain viscerally.

In April of this year, Ann Arbor Public School District's Board of Education, unfortunately, made the same type of misguided choice between inclusion and full cancellation.

In October 2023, Ann Arbor Public Schools's Jewish community applied to become a Board-designated affinity group. According to the Board's decade-old policy at the time, identity-based affinity groups could apply for Board recognition. Recognized groups, including the Ann Arbor

Gender and Sexuality Alliance; Asian, Pacific Islander, South Asian/American Parent Advisory

Group; the District Wide Black Parent and Student Support Group; and the AAPS Arab American Advisory Group, received permanent agenda time at Board meetings, visibility on the District's website, and support for affinity-based learning materials and affinity-based heritage months. Board recognition provided a critical opportunity for affinity groups – particularly those that were historically marginalized - to ensure that their own voices could be heard by the Board and the District community.

The Board responded to the Jewish community's application for affinity group designation through a combination of ignoring, stalling and making pretextual excuses. First the Board claimed that religious groups could not be Board-designated affinity groups. When the Jewish community explained—as so many of us have had to do in the past 18 months—that Jewish Americans are an ethnic group, a people, and not only a religious group, the Board stalled. For the next six months, the Board ignored the Jewish community's application, thereby excluding its unique experience and heritage from District programming and curriculum. Like the new kid, the Jewish community waited to see if it would be able to join its peers at the party.

Finally, on April 2, 2024, the Board made a decision: instead of approving the Jewish affinity group, it would dismantle the entire Board-designated affinity program.

Instead of including a Jewish voice alongside LGBTQ+, Asian, Pacific Islander, South Asian/American, Black, and Arab American voices, the Board chose a race to the bottom approach that made each group feel equally silenced and further marginalized.

In other words, the Board cancelled the party so that the Jews couldn't come.

When the party gets cancelled, when the library gets gutted, when the pool gets drained, there are multiple layers of hurt and trauma. Not only does the new kid miss out, but the new kid is vilified for causing everyone else to miss out. It is that unique injustice that we are witnessing now in Ann Arbor (not to mention in schools and universities across the country). Jewish students and parents who were already excluded, misunderstood or mistreated are now also being blamed for the canceled "party" and for the silencing of other groups' voices. Of course, the Jewish communities do not want the "party" cancelled—quite the opposite. Nevertheless, and with tragic irony, the Jews become both further excluded themselves, and blamed for others' exclusion.

So, what to do when the party gets cancelled? Where do we go from here? By a quick vote, the Ann Arbor Public School District's Board deprived the entire community of a valuable asset. The Board must immediately reverse course. It must reinstate the affinity group program, and include as many of its vibrant and diverse affinity groups – including the Jewish one – as possible. The best way to strengthen a school, a classroom — an entire community — is to ensure that every voice is heard, respected, and invited to join the party.

Lori Lowenthal Marcus, Legal Director, The Deborah Project

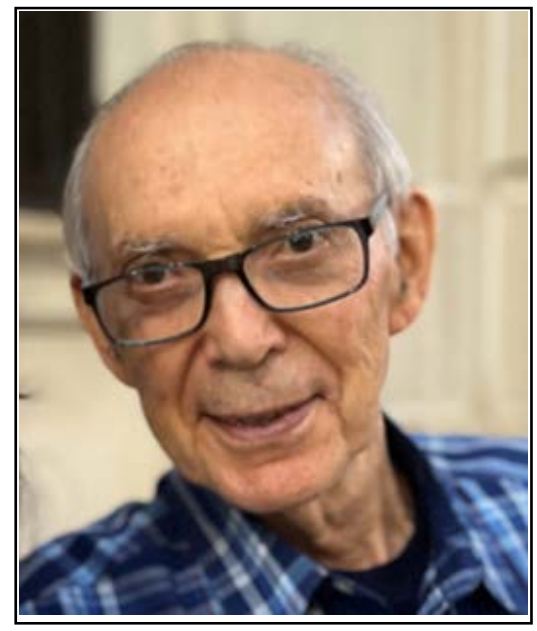
Jenna Statfeld Harris, Senior Counsel, StandWithUs Saidoff Legal

Joan Lowenstein, Former Councilmember, City of Ann Arbor ■

Obituaries

The WJN prints obituaries, memories, and eulogies free of charge for family members of Washtenaw Jewish community members as a service to the community and to honor the lives of those who have passed away. When local congregations send condolence notices to the WJN, the editor searches for obituaries online. Also, community members are invited to send obituaries to the editor.

Rachel Suzanne Ladin died in East Lansing on April 25. Rachel was born in Stamford, Connecticut, second of two children, to Lily and Eli Ladin, both immigrants, from Germany and Palestine respectively. After her early years in Connecticut, the family moved to Michigan where Rachel spent most of her life. She was raised in the Jewish tradition. She had friends, traveled, and played the violin and piano very nicely. After beginning college at Michigan State University, she gravitated to business study where she had significant aptitude. Unfortunately, she was not able to complete her studies as she began to suffer from mental illness. The last many years of her life were spent in the Kalkidan Group home in East Lansing, where she shared her warmth and generosity with her fellow residents. She will be missed by all who had the chance to know her.



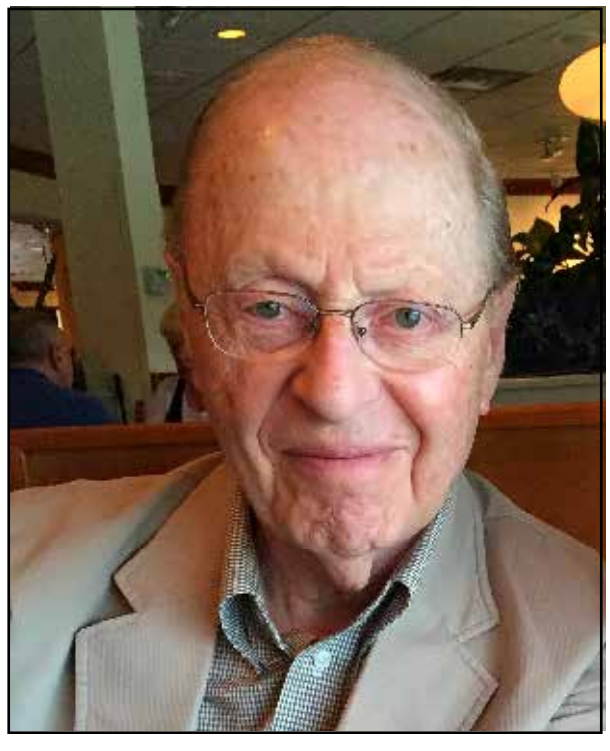
Gideon Shavit, PhD, born in 1935, son of Rivka and Isaac Shavit, passed away in Oakland, California. on April 30 after a stroke. Born in British controlled Palestine in 1935, Gideon and his family celebrated the founding of the modern State of Israel by choosing Shavit (meaning Comet) as the new family name, along with his brother Aaron and his sister Tehila. He served as a Lieutenant in the Israeli Defense force in the 1956 war, surviving an incident where his jeep rolled over a live landmine. After his military service, he enrolled in an Agricultural Engineering program at the Technion, the Israeli Institute of Technology. After graduation, Gideon was accepted to a master's Program in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Minnesota, where he had family on his father's side and met his wife of nearly 63 years, Gayle (Smith) Shavit, who he married in 1962.

Gideon took a position at Honeywell in Minneapolis and was soon transferred with Gayle and his newborn son Dean to an office in Arlington Heights, Illinois, where he worked until his retirement, eventually settling down in Highland Park after a stints in Skokie and Lexington, Massachusetts, with daughter Dawn (1966–2006), son Jordan (1970), and daughter Shira (1973). Earning a PhD in Mechanical Engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology, and U.S. Citizenship, Gideon had a very long and influential career working as Director of Honeywell's Advanced Engineering team until his retirement in the mid-90s. His career included extensive service as a fellow of the ASHRAE trade organization, numerous patents, a major role in the design and implementation of the HVAC control system for the World Trade Center, but most significantly, building an international network of talented engineers, most of whom became lifelong friends. A devoted father, Gideon often said "my children are my hobby" and worked tirelessly to provide for his family in as many ways as possible and was always there for them. However, Gideon was well acquainted with loss — first his brother Aaron in a work accident in 1965, then his father unexpectedly in 1970. His daughter Dawn was born in 1966 with severe developmental delay. But he persevered for his family, and was devoted to his mother Rivka, who he visited in Israel frequently until her death at 92 years old.

During his long retirement, Gideon spent quality time with his grandchildren Eli, Simon, and Nadav, while helping his wife Gayle run a private tutoring service — she taught reading and he taught math. He and Gayle traveled the world, often visiting many of his former colleagues in Japan and other countries until health issues forced them to stay put.

His entire life, Gideon Shavit was a great friend and colleague to many — his circle was highly educated and eclectic. Many of them are gone and happy to have him to rejoin in the next life. Gideon is preceded in death by his parents, older brother, daughter Dawn, and survived by his wife Gayle, sister Tehila, sons Dean (Robin Levin) and Jordan (Erika Levin), daughter Shira (John Muir), grandsons Eli, Simon, and Nadav.

The Shavit Family asks for donations to be made to Misericordia https://www.misericordia.com/giving/donate-online/ in lieu of flowers or gift baskets. ■



Alfred F. Kadis of Ann Arbor died on April 27, 2025. Beloved husband of 64 years of Joan Kadis. Cherished father of Kenneth (Rosalie) Kadis and Lori (Arthur) Feldman. Proud grandfather of Julia (Nick Weltz) Feldman, Dana (fiancé Aaron Renberg) Feldman, Miranda Kadis, and Cameron Kadis. Loving brother of the late Bernard Kadis and the late Barbara Kadis. Devoted son of the late Bella and the late Solomon Kadis.

Simchas and Sorrows

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends condolences to the families of:

Alfred Kadis, husband of Joan Kadis, father of Lori (Arthur) Feldman, and the grandfather of Julia and Dana. April 27, 2025.

Gideon Shavit, father of Jordan Shavit (Erika Levin), and grandfather of Eli and Simon. April 30, 2025

Rachel Ladin, daughter of Lily Ladin. April 25.

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends mazel tovs to:

Daniela Mordoch on her afternoon bat mitzvah, June 7.

Elizabeth and Enoch Brater on the birth of their granddaughter, Francesca Falce Brater, daughter of Allyse Falce and Jonathan Brater.

Barb McAnelly and Aaron Kluck on their marriage.

Art and Mary Schuman on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Creative journeys at AARC

By Emily Eisbruch

Research shows that a person's sense of well-being hinges on enjoying both simple pleasures and deeper connections. The Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC) is exploring new avenues to help people build these connections while having fun. These avenues include communal participation in art, singing, book reading, social justice activities, retreats, and potluck dinners at Kabbalat Shabbat services. At the recent first meeting of the AARC Artists' Collective, Rav Gavrielle shared examples of Jewish amulets and a decorative and devotional document known as a *shiviti*. Participants told about their own creative journeys and expressed enthusiasm for collaborating together or in parallel on creative projects moving forward.

The AARC davening team hosts sing-alongs to strengthen community connections through song. The AARC book club meets every two months, as it has for over 10 years. A wonderful tradition from the early years that's been revived in 2024 and 2025 is the AARC retreat, offering the chance for members to enjoy nature, dance, yoga, music, workshops, and worship together as well. Opportunities for social action are promoted on AARC email lists, providing a framework in which people's concern for society is supported and shared by kindred spirits.

"At the AARC's December 2024 annual congregational meeting it was really apparent that maintaining a strong community meant a lot to our members," comments AARC board chair Dave Nelson. "So we've endeavored to support activities and create opportunities for members to come together both joyfully and meaningfully outside of the regular cadence of services and holiday observances."

The AARC is a caring, inclusive, and music-loving community of people who want to practice and study Judaism — or simply be around people who share a commitment to Judaism's values. The AARC's spiritual leader, Rav Gavrielle Pescador, is known for her warmth, her collaborative spirit, and her incredible voice and harp playing. You are invited to visit https://aarecon.org/ or email info@aarecon.org to learn more about the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation. For more information about services or events or to receive Zoom links, please email: emily@aarecon.org

AARC Events for June

June 14

Pride Shabbat. Meditation led by Anita Rubin-Meuller, 10–10:20 a.m., followed by a hybrid Shabbat Service led by our Rabbi, Gabrielle Pescador, at the JCC and on Zoom. Zoom link will be sent out the week before the event. 10:30a.m.—noon.

June 27

Fourth Friday Kabbalat Shabbat. This is a hybrid service led by Rabbi Gabrielle Pescador in person at the JCC and on Zoom. Everyone is welcome! Followed by a nut-free potluck Oneg. 6:30 p.m. ■

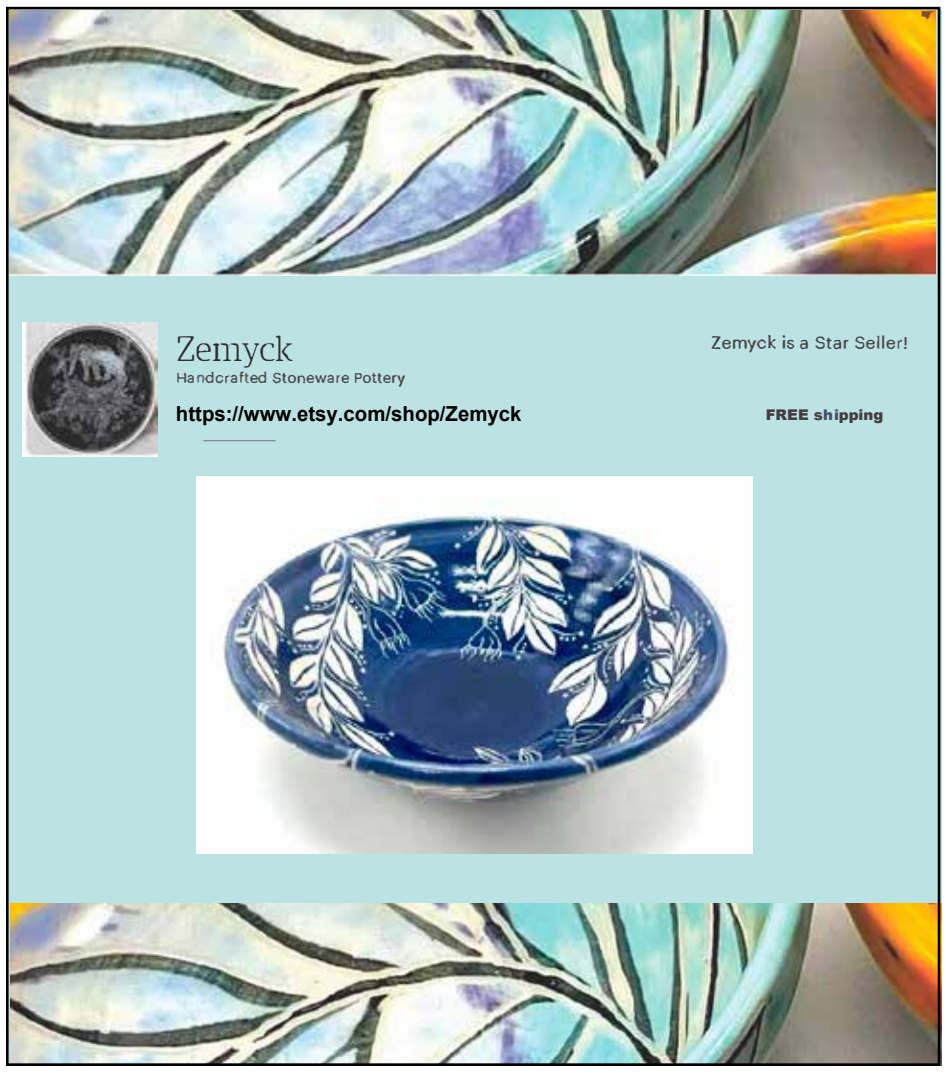
The kickoff of the AARC Artists' Collective

We can't help you plan a European vacation.

But we can help you with financial planning.

bank of ann arbor

Member FDIC



NEXTGen of Greater Ann Arbor

Join the Board!

Monthly Meetings: We meet once a month, either in person or virtually.

Event Planning: Board members help plan 2-3 events every 3-month cycle, always in partnership with at least one other board member

Shared Responsibilities: All members are involved in promoting events and building community—teamwork is at the core of what we do!

Special Roles (Optional): Interested in areas like social media, outreach, or design? You can take on a specialized role and plan fewer events to balance your workload.

Term Commitment: One-year term: August 2025 – August 2026.

Flexibility & Support: Life happens! We encourage open communication and adjust roles if you're navigating a busy season.

Kickoff & Training: We start strong with a 1-day board retreat in September to connect, train, and get excited for the year ahead.

Interest form here:

Giraffe
DESIGN BUILD
Residential Architecture
Residential Construction
Interior Architecture
Interior Design + Selections
Tour this home at the BRAG Showcase of New Homes, June 21st - 22nd, 11am-5pm
giraffedesignbuild.com
info@giraffedesignbuild.com
734.562.2125